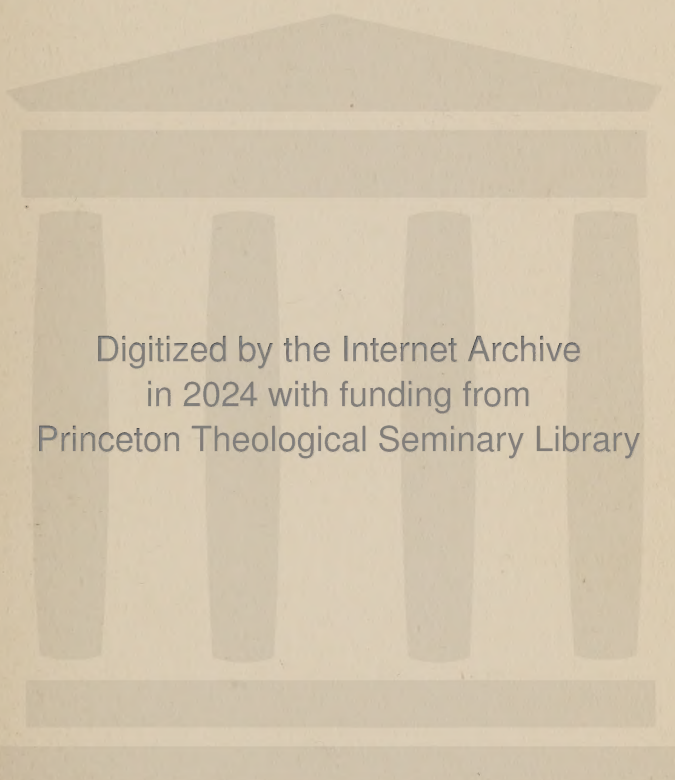
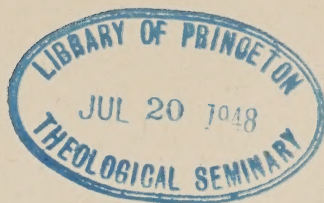


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CONFESSIONS
of an
AGNOSTIC CLERGYMAN



Confessions of an Agnostic Clergyman

By
E. Stanton Hodgin

A Lifelong Search
for a Satisfying Faith



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TO

my numerous nieces and nephews;
hoping that some of them may profit
by my experience

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CONFESSIONS
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CHAPTER ONE

Childhood Gropings and Ancestral Influences

WHEN I was eight years old I was "kept in" one day for some childish misdemeanor, and the teacher, in a serious talk, impressed upon me the importance of my immortal soul. I was assured that an essential though invisible part of me would never die, and if I did not mend my ways an endless life of extreme unhappiness would be my lot.

I went out from that presence bowed beneath a theological weight from which I have never fully recovered. During the remainder of my childhood and youth, the thought of my immortal soul was a constant source of serious apprehension and unhappiness. I could seldom give myself to any activity with joyous abandon. The thought of my soul's precarious condition was forever breaking in upon me with appalling effect and spoiling my fun. I settled down into a rather dismal impasse. If I should succeed in saving my soul for the next world, I would surely lose my life here and now — that is, I would lose everything in my daily experience that would make it worth while. I would be obliged to live a life of such constant vigilance against the trivial temptations forever besetting me, that it would be a virtual

torment. If I saved myself, here and now, by living the kind of life that appealed to me, secretly indulging some of my childish appetites such as raiding the cooky jar, I would surely lose my soul in the world to come. What should I do? The result was that in my thoughtful intervals, I vacillated between an attitude of reckless defiance and one of anxious concern.

Of course, I could not put my childish difficulty into words. It was a numbing, inarticulate dilemma that hung over me like a haunting presence. If I could have expressed my feelings, and had dared to do so, I should have wished God and immortality nonexistent. I should have preferred to accept life for what it seemed to be; get all of the satisfaction out of it that I could, from day to day; and then face death for what it seemed to be — the end of life.

That youthful attitude has persisted in my life, to no small extent, to this day. I have always wanted to question every theological statement, and to cast doubt on every dogma. Instead of bringing me solace and a sense of security, the thoughts of God and of immortality that are expressed in virtually all institutional religions have been oppressive and dispiriting.

* * *

My ancestors, for many generations back, were Friends — vulgarly called Quakers. According to the best knowledge I can obtain, a young man by the name of Robert Hodgson became a follower of George Fox, the English founder of the Society of Friends, about the middle of the seventeenth century. Filled with the nascent zeal of a convert, he experienced an overwhelming concern to carry the true light (which he doubted not that he had received), into

one of the dark spots of the earth. About that time word came to England, his homeland, of the scandalous and inhuman treatment to which some of his fellow believers were being subjected in Boston, one of the newly established settlements in faraway America. Massachusetts, he concluded, must be one of the woefully wicked sections of the world, and he felt himself chosen to carry the enlightenment of the true gospel to that benighted land.

He soon made the necessary preparations, and, accompanied by other Friends, as the Quakers always called themselves, he set out hopefully for the New World. After a tempestuous voyage they finally sailed into the sheltered waters of Boston Harbor. But the Puritans had no notion of sharing their newly-gained freedom with such aggressively proselyting zealots as the new sect had become. The authorities in Boston, learning that more of the "Friendly" troublemakers were on board, placed a guard over the vessel and would not let the missionaries set foot on the land of the free. Perhaps it was well for me that Robert Hodgson was not permitted to go ashore, for as it happened, four disciples of the inner light were hanged on Boston Common that very year! The ardent young enthusiast might have been the fifth to give his life for the "light" if the opportunity had not been denied him!

After some weeks delay, the ship coasted southward and the disappointed but undaunted harbinger of a new day finally landed in New Amsterdam — later renamed New York. He was to be tried still more severely before an opportunity was afforded him to speak for the new faith. Some self-righteous Puritans who were sojourning in the Dutch colony alarmed the volatile Governor Stuyvesant by informing him

that a very dangerous, revolutionary firebrand was invading the peaceful community. "Headstrong Peter", thrown into one of his tantrums by the unwelcome news, ordered the newcomer to be summarily arrested and disciplined. He was roughly taken into custody, given a shovel, tied to a wheelbarrow and ordered to fill it with dirt. He replied that he would be glad to perform any kind of labor, but he must be told what charges were being brought against him before he could acquiesce in the penalty. Instead of receiving an answer, he was beaten with a rope's end until he fainted. This ordeal was repeated for several days in succession.

Some of the liberty loving people of the colony were so incensed at this inhuman treatment that they remonstrated vigorously. The Governor's choler having cooled, the prisoner was released and permitted to go his way. In spite of his unwelcome reception he remained in America, becoming the forbear of a sizeable progeny, the spelling of whose names changed somewhat under the influences of time and locality.

That the Quakers have always been a sedate, kindly, retiring people whose outstanding virtues were passive or even negative, is the prevailing opinion. Nothing could be farther from the true character of the first generation of the followers of George Fox, for they were not the meek and lowly nonresistants that they later came to be, but were intensely aggressive and dynamic, to the last degree. They were fighters who asked no quarter, resorting to armament too subtle for their opponents to handle or comprehend — weapons of the spirit instead of those of iron and steel.

The intensely aggressive character of the early Quaker

movement is seen by the rapidity with which it spread throughout the entire civilized world. Within twenty years from the time that George Fox began preaching the authority of the "inner light", Quaker preachers, young and old, both men and women, had carried the new illumination, not only into every corner of the British Isles, however remote, but also into all of the continental countries of Europe, including Russia and Turkey. It had spread across the sea into each of the English colonies of America and into the West India islands. When we consider the difficulties of travel and communication in those days this seems like an unbelievable achievement. There was little centralized or directed organization in the movement. It was individualistic and spontaneous; each person followed the inner light that flamed in his own soul threatening to consume him if he heed it not.

The rapid spread of the new faith was due not only to the zeal of its devotees, but also to the fact that all over the western world, as a result of the individualistic seeds unintentionally sown by the Protestant Reformation, millions of people were groping and reaching out for the kind of inner authority that the practical mysticism of the Quakers supplied. There was much undifferentiated Quakerism in the world before the Quakers appeared to crystallize it.

When Anne Hutchinson and her antinomian followers were cast out of Massachusetts Bay Colony, they migrated to Rhode Island and established an order of faith and practice so similar to Quakerism that they later easily affiliated themselves with the Quakers, without undergoing any appreciable outer or inner change.

The early itinerant Quaker preachers were primarily dis-

coverers. They sought out and found the mute millions who were eagerly but inarticulately waiting for a more personal and practical gospel than they were able to formulate for themselves. Quakerism was a response to the widespread spiritual hunger of the time. It was a humanistic theism for which millions were anxiously longing. To them, divinity was not so much a sovereign being to be worshipped and obeyed, as an indefinable but very real, all-pervasive influence which they must experience and incorporate into their own lives if they were to truly live. Other-worldliness was to them not so much the hope of an escape into another realm after death, as it was an accommodation of life at its best, to this world, here and now. Salvation was fullness of world-life rather than release from it.

Young Robert Hodgson was apparently the embodiment of this religio-humanitarian movement and he and his descendants did much to give character to the new life and ideals that were developing in the colonies.

War times were always troublous times for the Quakers, and the Revolutionary period was an especially trying one for them. Personal liberty and individual conscience were the essence of their faith, and to resort to sheer brute force seemed to them to be the abandonment of the only kind of power that was compatible with true liberty. Freedom was too largely a spiritual experience to be furthered by physical violence, either on the part of a nation or an individual. They were persecuted by both the Tories and the Patriots during the Revolution, because they would not join in the fight on either side. They thrilled at the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence. Those principles were

Quakerism pure and simple, carried over into the political realm. Thomas Paine's early Quaker training and environment contributed not a little to his keen appreciation of the issues at stake in the Declaration of Independence, and his ability to enunciate them with compelling clarity. But all attempts to establish those principles by force, instead of by persuasion, seemed to the Quakers like a complete repudiation of their essence. Paine's Quakerism did not go that far.

Quakers were numerous in all of the colonies during the eighteenth century. Several Quaker families in the south, including some of the descendants of Robert Hodgson, went out into an unsettled section of the colony of Georgia and established themselves there in an endeavor to get away from the conflict. They tried to make friends with the Indians, and on the whole succeeded fairly well. However, with so much fighting going on, the poor natives had a hard time trying to discover "who was who and why!" So the little colony did not entirely escape the depredations of the natives, and on one occasion two small sisters by the name of Children were carried away and grew up as Indian children. The older girl remembered the former life and never abandoned hope of being restored to it, some day. As they grew older she told the younger sister the story of their past and they formulated plans to run away.

One summer day when all of the adults were out of camp, they undertook their escape. For several days they wandered in the wilderness subsisting on berries and other wild food. They were finally found by a group of white hunters, who restored them to their parents. The older girl was so weakened by the strain and exposure that she died, but the

younger survived, and learned the English language and civilized ways. At eighteen she married William Hodgkin (as the name was then spelled) and became the mother of a goodly number of American citizens.

The trials and tribulations of the members of this little colony did not end with the termination of the war for independence. Other settlers established themselves all about them, some of them bringing Negro slaves. The Quakers' abhorrence of slavery was as pronounced as their abhorrence of war, and their constant testimony against this iniquitous institution made them very unpopular in the South. Hearing that a section of country far to the north was being opened for settlement, which would be forever free from the hated institution of slavery, they selected two of their number, William Hodgkin and William Patten, to be the Caleb and Joshua to spy out the promised land and see if it was all that it was said to be. The "spies" brought back such a satisfactory report that the members of the entire community packed their portable possessions into their ox carts and treked across the Carolinas, across the Old Dominion to settle in the Northwest Territory, the year that a portion of it was admitted into the Union as the state of Ohio.

Another group of Quakers from North Carolina moved into this frontier county (Belmont) about the same time, having deserted their homeland for the same reason — hatred of slavery. My mother, whose maiden name was Dawson, was a daughter of one of these North Carolina families. Thus, it was the humanitarian passion for liberty that brought my father and mother together.

My father and mother, like many young couples, were looking for new worlds to conquer. So taking Horace Greeley's advice they travelled westward as far as the railroads of the time would take them. This chanced to be eastern Iowa where a Quaker community was being established, composed almost entirely of young people from eastern Ohio who knew each other.

Not finding life on the rolling prairie of Iowa quite raw enough to satisfy the spirit of adventure that had evidently laid hold on them, they yielded to the lure of another promised land that loomed up still further westward beyond the horizon.

Abraham Lincoln had just signed the "homestead law" that offered a free farm to young people courageous and persevering enough to take it and subdue it. The whole of western Iowa and Minnesota were at that time uninhabited, but the new law did not apply to these states because the land was virtually all held by eastern speculators who had bought up large tracts, for small amounts, from railroad companies, universities and other beneficiaries of the government. As a result of the homestead law, the southeastern counties of Dakota territory were occupied and brought under cultivation twenty years before the western portions of Iowa and Minnesota were settled, much to the chagrin of many of the eastern speculators.

The nearest point where it was possible for my father and mother to receive good, free land from the government was three hundred miles to the northwest across the Sioux River in the newly organized territory of Dakota. Like many others, they could not resist the lure of free land, notwithstanding the fact that serious Indian outbreaks were occur-

ring along this very frontier. The poor unenlightened red men, seeing that the Christians were apparently bent on annihilating each other, thought it a fitting time to try to enforce some of the promises that had been made to them. This was the bloodiest summer of the Civil War, and some of the real "native sons" were taking a hand in the blood-letting on their own behalf.

Yoking their sturdy oxen, Buck and Berry, to a covered wagon, leading two milk cows behind, my father and mother, their two-year-old daughter, and a younger brother of my father made their way alone over the vast stretch of vacant prairie that lay between them and the promised land of a free farm.

During that momentous journey and the years following, this little family experienced all the difficulties, dangers, sorrows, sufferings, joys and triumphs that are described so vividly and accurately in Rölvaag's saga, *Giants in the Earth*. The one outstanding difference, and a tremendously important one, was, that in my parents' case, no religious differences arose in the family to bring tragedy and disaster.

It was in the Dakota territory in 1868, four years after the homestead had been staked out, that I put in my appearance in mid-winter to still further complicate an already overburdened situation in a one-room log cabin.

That little habitation was regarded as a temporary make-shift when first occupied, but the depredations of the grasshoppers and other unforeseeable adversities compelled them to be content with their cramped quarters for seven years. Finally, on my third birthday the family moved into a new frame house with the luxury of several rooms.

Fifty-two years after my appearance in that diminutive

claim shanty in Dakota, I went to Massachusetts to "preach the true gospel" to the people of that Commonwealth. I could say that I was simply carrying out the mission that my paternal ancestor had so hopefully and expectantly embarked upon nearly three centuries before.

My mother was a victim of the dread "consumption" that wrought havoc among the ill-nourished, poorly sheltered and overworked pioneers. She died after a lingering illness, when I was five and a half years old. Four children, a sister eleven, a brother seven, a younger sister two, and I, constituted the family when the tragic blow fell. After an interval of a few months I was completely separated from the other members of the family for the next thirteen years, but that early period remains as fixed and vivid in my memory as any portion of my life.

During her illness the word "mother" was the one sacred word in our vocabulary. It was always pronounced softly and gently. It meant a pale, fragile creature who moved noiselessly about, often speaking to us in whispers. We could not be rough or boisterous in her presence, but went out behind the stable or the haystacks when we wished to romp and play noisy games. When mother was "resting" we tiptoed about the house in order not to disturb her. Mother's comfort was the one consideration to which everything must conform. I was a roly-poly cherub about as broad as I was high, and during her last days my head was about as high as the bed on which she reposed. When she would lay her thin, almost transparent hand on my tousled head and smile, I would resolve again to try harder than ever to be quiet, and not disturb her.

I am sure that my attitude toward death was profoundly influenced for my entire lifetime by our early experiences on the prairie. My father was not only a farmer but a butcher also, furnishing meat for a market in the nearby town. Every-day in the small slaughterhouse on the farm I witnessed the killing of cattle, sheep, hogs and other domestic animals in the most primitive fashion, usually done by a stroke from the poll of a heavy ax — a completely painless death, by the way. In addition to that, various kinds of wild game were occasionally brought in and proudly exhibited as evidence of the huntsman's prowess. Every cabin had one or more guns over its door in the most conspicuous place in the dwelling. That the sole purpose of these instruments was the infliction of death upon man or beast everyone knew, from the oldest to the youngest.

The prairie landscapes were conspicuously strewn with the whitening bones of cattle, horses, buffalo and other animals. The children built houses and other architectural structures out of these bones, for want of other materials with which to occupy themselves. What wonderful playthings those skeletons were! What a variety of implements and utensils the various shaped bones could simulate!

We thus lived in the presence of death all the time. My mother's death was no unusual mystery to me. I was inclined to take it for just what it seemed to be — the end of life. I watched them lower the casket and fill in the grave, as I had watched other bodies disposed of when life left them. I recognized that this particular death affected us profoundly, because the most important person in the household had ceased to live, but I had no inkling that the death of a per-

son was in any way different from the death of any other living thing. So far as I can see I had just as clear a comprehension (or incomprehension) of death when I was five as I had at seventy-five.

Our "hired girl" told us that our mother had ascended into the clouds and was living up there far happier than she was when she was living with her family. I had learned from experience that the "hired girl's" stories could not always be depended upon, so she did not make as much impression upon me as she might otherwise have done. If my father had told me anything of that kind I should have believed him, as I had come to regard my father as the one person who always told the truth.

I am profoundly grateful for the fact that our father, so far as I can remember, gave us no formal theological instruction in our childhood. I regard the conditioning of young children by theological beliefs to be one of the great obstacles in facing life clear-eyed and unafraid in adult years.

Frontier life is likely either to narrow or broaden one in his theological views. One seldom remains stationary. The orthodox person often becomes more intensely orthodox and intolerant under the bludgeonings of hardship and danger, while the liberally inclined person is likely to become more broad-minded or even skeptical. My father's and mother's Quakerism developed in the direction of rationalism.

About the time that they migrated westward they began to call themselves Universalists. The Universalist movement was making headway at that time, in combating the orthodox doctrine of "hell" which was still preached with all of its primitive literalness in many churches. The Universalist

belief was far more widespread than the number of churches bearing the name would indicate.

My father called himself a Universalist for over thirty years before he had a chance to attend church services that were congenial to him. One of the great satisfactions of his declining years was his affiliation with a flourishing Universalist church in Pasadena, California, where he spent the last two decades of his life.

Though the stories of frontier life have been told again and again and need not be repeated here, it always seemed like a miracle of survival to me. My father never wanted anyone to feel sorry for him. He stoutly maintained to the day of his death, at the age of eighty-three, in his comfortable Pasadena home, that those early Dakota years, before my mother's death, were the happiest and most satisfactory ones of his life. There was a community interdependence and *camaraderie* about that frontier life that was highly compensating.

The months following my mother's death seem almost like a nightmare to me as I recall them. I am sure that I encountered no intentional unkindness from anyone, but it was all so confusingly different from anything I was accustomed to, and I came into contact with so many people who were strange to me, that it was at times quite terrifying. I was happy enough much of the time, no doubt, as children usually are, but it was the unhappy experiences that registered themselves in my memory. The fact that my sufferings were nearly all mental, makes them significant in my attempts to trace the steps of my spiritual development.

One of the shocks of my life came when I discovered what a different connotation the word "mother" had in many other families. Soon after my mother's death a neighboring family moved into our little home to help "take care" of the children. There were three children in the added family, but ten people in a small house was more usual than exceptional in frontier communities. The woman of the invading family was a heavy, swarthy creature with dark straight hair, whose sunburnt face and arms made her scarcely distinguishable from the Indian squaws who were frequently seen in those days. She was a kindly soul in her way, but if my father had searched the community he could hardly have found a female who would stand out in sharper contrast in every way to what the word "mother" meant to me. Her loud, raucous voice was in such contrast to my mother's soft tones or whisperings that it frightened me. Apparently the arrangement was not satisfactory and the family soon departed, to the relief of all of us.

For some weeks the family was alone, except for my younger sister who was taken into the home of a friendly neighbor. This was the least unhappy period of the interval, but things did not always go my way then. Of course I wanted to be with my brother, two years older than I, but family economy decreed that my brother should go with my father and help in the fields and elsewhere, while I was relegated to the prosaic task of staying at home and helping my sister (eleven) with the housework. My sister was a paragon of patience and resourcefulness in devising ways and means of keeping me busy and contented. She was a wonderful teacher, though she seldom thought of herself as such, except occasionally when we played school. It is amazing

how much I learned from my sister before I was six years old.

For a short period (all periods seem long to a small child) my brother and I attended school in the nearby log school-house that had benches and desks of crude hand-made construction, and lived with a neighboring family. This family consisted of a widow and a large number of children — so many that two more apparently made little difference. I presume that this was not an act of pure benevolence on the part of the widow, though such acts were not infrequent in frontier communities. The larger the family the readier it often was to take in any stray waif that came along. The probabilities are that the compensation my father gave her was the deciding factor, as it helped feed the entire brood a little more fully. Anyway she gave us the best she had, which was none too good.

My brother was old enough to join in the rough and tumble life and enjoy it, but I did not know how to take it. The constant banter, and bickering and wrestling among the older boys, occasionally ending in a bloody nose or a black eye, was quite appalling to me. Sometimes the widow, a big muscular woman, would take a hand in the family frays, attempting to chastise the guilty ones — attempts in which she was not usually very successful. Not the least humiliating of my experiences was the fact that I had to sleep in the corner of a big bed with two or three older girls, instead of sleeping with a bedful of boys as my brother did. It was certainly a very Bohemian sort of life for such a timid child. Children were tucked in at the foot of the bed, "crosswise" or any other way, so that every square inch of space was occupied. The closer they packed them the warmer they were.

Conditions in the school were even more terrifying. It was late in the fall and the big boys from the farms were in attendance. They seemed like great Brobdingnagian giants to me. I could hardly see to the top of their heads as I stood in their midst. Their rough and noisy ways were about as alarming to me as the supermen were to little Gulliver in Swift's fantastic romance.

We had an austere man teacher who never smiled so far as I can remember. He gave his entire attention to the older pupils, and the small children were ignored, being too insignificant even for reproof. I cannot remember that he ever noticed me, though I suppose he did. This was in sharp contrast to my experience in school the summer before. There had been no big boys in school then, and the woman teacher made school a pleasure.

One of the great thrills of my life came when my father dropped in one evening and casually told us to come home the next morning for we would all start to Iowa the following day. Iowa! Land of luxury! I had always heard Iowa spoken of with a kind of reverence — as the Fatherland — a place where everybody had whatever he wanted! Iowa must be perfect. Had we not been told that it meant a long ride on the cars? and a place where apples could be picked off the trees?

The trip to Iowa, three hundred miles away, before I was six years old, was my first great adventure into the outer world. It meant a long "ride on the cars" and who can imagine today what a thrill the mere mention of it gave us then.

The first railroad in Dakota had been built only a short

time before. It is difficult to realize how much its coming meant in the hard, drab, monotonous life of the prairies. It linked us with the rest of life. The "cars" would take us to all of the wonderful places in the world, and would bring not a few of the world's wonders to us. To children it meant more than the coming of the judgment day that they sometimes heard spoken of as supremely important.

I distinctly remember hearing the pounding when the rails were being laid a mile or so from our farm. I was indulged in the thrilling privilege of walking three quarters of a mile with my brother and sister one frosty morning to look over the bluff where we could see a construction train — the first train in the Territory — crawling slowly along on the track below. The slow moving thing was a distinct disappointment to me, for I had been told again and again that the "cars" were the fastest moving things on the earth. My sister, who always had a sensible explanation for everything, told me that the fast moving trains would come when the track was all laid.

I was fully satisfied a few weeks later when father loaded us into the spring wagon and drove down the "ravine road" to the railroad, stopping a few rods before we reached the track. The track crossed the road at the foot of the ravine in such a way that only a short section of it was visible to us, the rest of it being hidden by the bluffs on either side. We began to hear a low rumble that grew louder and louder until suddenly a short passenger train dashed by with a terrifying roar, shriek and clang, disappearing before we could see what it was like. That particular train trip from Sioux City to Yankton may have been staged for the benefit of the onlookers. I, at least, was duly impressed and from that time on

entertained no doubts as to what the "old iron horse" could do.

One of our favorite amusements during this period consisted of getting out the old buffalo robe, spreading it over a few chairs and playing "ride on the cars". By rattling the chairs, stamping, whistling, shrieking and ringing a bell, we could make almost as much noise as the train, when we were permitted to cut loose.

Our Iowa Odyssey occupied two or three days. We had to "change cars" several times, waiting long intervals, as it seemed to me, for the next train. It was not all poetry by any means, for I was desperately car sick part of the time. Iowa seemed to be a cold, gloomy inhospitable place, for we arrived at our destination aboard a bumpy old freight train on a lowering November day and no one welcomed us at the station as had been expected. We had to wait some time in a chill waiting room, while father found someone to take us out to "grandfather's house". It was a slow windy ride, I saw no apples on the few scraggly, leafless trees that grew by the roadside, and the glamour faded from the imagined Iowa in a disappointing way!

CHAPTER TWO

An Iowa Interlude: The Quaker Epoch in My Life — Childhood and Adolescence

MY EARLY experience in Iowa — what may be called the Quaker epoch in my career — stands out distinctly from the rest of my life. For thirteen years I was separated from the members of my immediate family, although my grandfather, two uncles, an aunt, and their families, whom I had never seen, lived in the community to which I was transplanted.

I was adopted (not legally) by a young couple who had lost their first born a short time before — a little boy about my age and bearing the same given name. My name, somewhat capriciously given me by my father, was thus a determining factor in the course my life was to take.

Although not in any way related to my family, this kindly couple at once took me into their hearts as well as their home, and did everything for me that they would have done for their own child if he had lived. For the first time in my life I found myself the center of interest in the household — a fact which I am afraid I sometimes turned to my own selfish advantage. I nestled down in my new home enjoying a sense of comfort and security such as I had never felt before.

The period of childish anxiety and uncertainty that characterized the months following my mother's death was over.

The "seventies" were lean years in the economic world and my benefactors were compelled to economize in every possible way, but they gladly shared everything with me. During the first winters in my new home they nursed me through two long serious attacks of "lung fever", when my life was despaired of. They later had a son of their own, but this in no way detracted from their interest in and care for my well-being.

I soon discovered that a different interest or atmosphere from that of our Dakota home pervaded this older community. Pretty much all interest centered in the "meeting". Much of the talk in the homes was about what happened at "meeting" or was about the people who were or were not at "meeting". A majority of the families of the community were members of the Society of Friends. My father was still a member, as my mother had been, and that gave me a "birthright", which was the basis of membership that prevailed. Everybody attended "meeting" twice a week, First-day (Sunday) and Fifthday (Thursday). The meetinghouse, a long perfectly plain structure, was the center of the community, geographically and in every other way.

I presume that I had never attended a religious service prior to my Iowa experience, though I do have a vague recollection of attending somewhere, a gathering at which a large old man with a long, heavy, white beard got down on his knees and spoke at length in a strange tone of voice. I knew that there were church buildings, but I hardly think that curiosity had developed sufficiently to cause me to wonder what took place

inside those important structures. I heard the word "religion" used in conversation frequently and gained the impression that it was something of much value, but what it was, was as much of a mystery to me then as it is now. With my arrival in Iowa "religion" began to be more real and to take on definiteness: it was what we went to "meeting" for, and "meeting" was the most important thing in life. From then on I attended "meeting" regularly, whenever I was able.

On Firstdays the large meetinghouse was usually well filled. Many outsiders from the neighborhood attended. More often than otherwise not a word would be spoken, perfect silence prevailing for a full hour. As years passed, more of the members felt a "concern" to speak and the silence was not quite so oppressive to a restless child.

The men all sat on one side of the meetinghouse and the women on the other. The two parts were separated by a thin partition containing what were called "shutters". During the meetings of worship the shutters were drawn so that the two assemblages were visible to each other, but during "business meetings" the shutters were closed, each sex transacting its own business, consisting mainly of matters of discipline and administration. From these business sessions non-members were excluded.

The elderly men who sat on what were called the "facing seats" (elevated a little and facing the audience) wore a peculiar kind of broad brimmed, stovepipe hat. The other men wore whatever kind of hat they were fortunate enough to possess, but nearly all of them kept their hats on their heads during the worship period. The coat collars were supposed to be of a somewhat different cut from those on "store" clothes.

The women of that time conformed almost to a person to the traditional Friend's garb; the elderly women wearing one peculiar kind of bonnet and dress, the middle-aged another and the young women and girls still another. They adhered also quite rigidly to what was called the "plain language". These peculiarities of dress and address have almost disappeared with the passage of time.

I found that I belonged to the small branch of "Wilbur" Friends who adhered more rigidly to the original ways of doing things (especially of not doing things) than did the others. They looked askance at the larger body of "Gourney" Friends whom they accused of following the "vain fashions of the world" to a scandalous degree. I well remember how the elders talked about Thomas Y. Hoover (a "Gourney") and his "goings on" as a horrible example of what worldliness would do to one who strayed from the straight and narrow way. He was the uncle of an infant named Herbert Hoover who afterward became President of the United States.

The "Wilburs" looked with still greater condemnation upon the "Hicksites" who were badly tainted by Unitarian and Universalist influences. I soon learned that even the Friends had their unfriendly controversies just as the United Brethren had their divisions, to quote from my predecessor Dr. Simmons, in Minneapolis.

I attended Friend's school exclusively during the Iowa period; Friends maintained their own schools at considerable extra expense to safeguard the manners and morals of the young. The schools were much like the secular district schools, except that the use of the "plain language" was

rigidly enforced and the "vain fashions of the world" were carefully excluded. Most of the ordinary courtesies that are taught children in the name of manners were taboo. There was very little in the school that could be construed as religious instruction, and theology was almost completely absent. The inculcation of right habits was considered the all important thing.

The school house was near the meeting house and every Fifth day we marched in orderly procession into the meeting house to attend the week day service of silence with the people of the neighborhood. Each session of the school began and ended with a short period of complete silence; one of the worst infringements of discipline was for a pupil to make the least noise or disturbance at that time. A few verses of scripture were read to the pupils by the teacher once a day, always without comment or explanation. In many homes family worship was observed, consisting of the reading of a few verses from the Bible and a period of silence. Each meal began with a silent grace, a practice that has always been observed in our home.

For some reason not easy to account for, pupils made greater progress in Friend's school than in the surrounding district schools, and "outsiders" sometimes solicited the privilege of sending their children to the school because they considered it superior. The sessions were somewhat longer than in the other schools, beginning at half past eight and closing at half past four, and there were no holidays. For a pupil not to like school was a strange phenomenon and compulsory attendance was something of which I never heard until later in life. The opening of a term of school was always looked forward to with keen anticipation and we watched the ap-

proach of the closing day with regret. The same bickerings, rivalries, hard feelings and factional encounters were present here as in all similar schools, but they were seldom serious. The same human traits were there to deal with that exist everywhere that human beings congregate and are given freedom to express themselves. The teachers' task was not always an easy one.

I remember my teachers of that period with respect and affection. None of them were trained but in their freedom they often stumbled upon methods that are now considered advanced. They sometimes seemed to have a pragmatic intuition for doing what needed to be done.

After I was twelve years of age I attended school only during the winter months, as I was supposed to do a man's work with a "team" in the fields. Perhaps the hard work that always awaited us on the farm accounts to no small degree for the eagerness with which we looked forward to the opening of school! I was permitted to pursue the studies I desired and to omit those in which I was not interested. I do not recommend this procedure without modification, though I do think that some consideration should be given to a child's interests and capacities, even in the primary grades.

I have always regretted the lack of thorough drill in my elementary education. I received very little training or instruction in the use of English, either spoken or written, until I was a sophomore in college, because I evaded it. I have never been able to overcome the handicap of this omission.

Advanced subjects, such as algebra, geometry, physics and astronomy were taught when there was a demand for them. It was the smatterings of knowledge of general science, and information concerning the world life that I was able to

gather in school and in my general reading, that to a greater degree than anything else made life worth living.

The severest disciplinary experiences of my childhood among the Friends were the silent meetings in the big meeting house. Children were taken to meeting at a preposterously early age. The smaller ones were encouraged to lay their heads in their parents' laps and sleep through the period, but no boy of spirit six years old would consent to such a baby act as that!

Imagine me sitting on a high, hard, wooden bench with my feet dangling, while the single slender rail that constituted the back of the bench seemed to have been put there for the sole purpose of banging me in the back of the head. What could I do? usually not a word was spoken; and if anyone did venture to break the silence it was in accents so ominous and apprehensive that it was a relief to lapse back into the soothing silence again.

The perfectly plain, unpainted, barn-like room afforded nothing of interest on which the eye could rest. When I was lying on my sickbed at home I could imagine all sorts of beasts, birds and even humans, hiding in the figures of the wallpaper, but there was nothing of that kind in the meeting-house. I sometimes tried to trace in the figures made by the crisscrossing cracks in the plastering the outlines of geographical maps with which I had become familiar. I could frequently spend an interesting interval watching the flies walking about on the ceiling — trying to imagine what they were saying to each other in their apparent interviews. Occasionally I could witness the exciting spectacle of two belligerent flies fighting it out on some bald head in front of me.

I occasionally turned detective, looking up and down the rows of elderly persons on the "facing seats" to see if I could detect anyone "nodding". Nodding in meeting was an offense taken cognizance of in the "queries and answers" that constituted an important part of the business sessions. Often when sitting through a tiresome, unintelligible business session I heard the clerk read in answer to the "query" on "conduct of the meeting" the ominous answer, "unbecoming behaviour generally avoided, except some instances of sleeping". Then a serious discussion would sometimes arise; some lenient person maintaining that "sleeping" was too strong an expression and suggesting that the word "drowsiness" be substituted in its place.

Little did I appreciate the ordeal to which those elderly men were subjected. They were hard-working farmers who worked out in the open all the week. To expect them to come into an over-heated meetinghouse and sit in silent immovable repose for an hour without sometimes momentarily sliding into the lap of Morpheus, was expecting something almost superhuman. Nevertheless, discipline must be upheld at any cost and such lapses could not be wholly overlooked.

It was "tit-for-tat" as far as we were concerned. It was not unusual for one of the elders to rise in his place in the business meeting or even in the meeting for worship and rebuke the youth for their restlessness and misbehaviour. The boys had certain silent codes of communication among themselves and occasionally an unsuppressible giggle would break the awful silence — a terrible offense that could not be condoned. For a youngster to catch one of the elders redhanded in the "unbecoming behaviour" of nodding in meeting was sweet revenge, even if he dare not say anything about it. Hu-

man nature was not one whit different among 'Friends than elsewhere.

My grandfather who was the oldest man in the community and an elder of good repute, sat at the "head of the meeting". This was a grave responsibility, for upon him devolved the momentous matter of deciding when they had communed with the spirit long enough, and of "breaking meeting" by shaking hands with the man who sat next to him. He occupied the left hand end of the highest seat, the most conspicuous position in the house as he could be almost equally well seen from either the men's or the women's side of the house.

Grandfather was a short, heavy man and he seemed to melt down into a kind of expressionless human mass almost without form as he sat there at the head of the meeting. I would watch him steadfastly at times wondering how any living being could keep so still, for I was all "afidget". Occasionally he would apparently come to life, open his eyes and look around, shifting his cane to the other side of his legs. My heart would beat fast and I would say to myself excitedly "now he is going to break meeting". But no, he would soon sink down again into another apparently endless period of coma and I would wonder if I could possibly endure to the end. Sometimes I would wonder if he had not ceased to live, and would speculate as to the dire consequences. I was sure that no one else would dare intervene and break meeting and so I pictured us all sitting there until we passed out and joined him in the great beyond.

But all things do reach a climax. When I had sunk so deep into despair that I was almost oblivious, the meeting would suddenly and unexpectedly "break". Then the people would

shake hands and smile and suddenly become human again. The cheerful conversation that sprang up on all sorts of ordinary topics of the day would be such a relief and such a contrast to the terrible solemnity that preceded it, that there was a dramatic and refreshing compensation in the experience. It was worth enduring the eternity of suspense to see how we all snapped back into vigorous life again. It was like a resurrection of the dead.

Watches were not plentiful in those days, and even if the man at the head of the meeting had possessed one, he would never have dreamed of performing such a secular act as looking at it to see if the proper time had elapsed. They were engaged in worship — communion with the spirit — and the inner light alone could determine when they had communed long enough.

Why did young people remain loyal to an institution that offered them little but discomfort? Some of them did not; but many of them continued to attend meeting voluntarily after they had reached the age of independence. Stranger still, not a few "outsiders" attended also, though it is difficult to see what could have attracted them.

There were doubtless many contributing reasons why people attended a service that seems so utterly innocuous, one of them being a lack of anything else to break the monotony of the drab life. But there was much more than that. It was a meeting of souls in a very real sense. It was tremendously impressive because of the seriousness with which it was accepted and carried on. It is doubtful if anything is more impressive than sustained silence.

The ordeal of silence is a penance followed by a sense of purification that is often amazing. Habit is the strongest

thing in the world, and a habit that it costs something to establish is doubly strong. It cost the Friends something to establish the habit of silent worship, and when they attempted to abandon it, something went out of their lives.

We little realize today the socializing power of silent association — how sharing the silence melts people into a conscious brotherhood. The unifying power of silence contrasts with the divisive power of controversy. With Friends the service of silence which they took so seriously was a sacrament that gave them a sense of social solidarity. They were one with a oneness that a religious sanction alone can give.

In spite of somber appearances Friends were a social and cheerful people. They enjoyed social intercourse, enjoyed sharing good food, and none knew better what good cooking was. They gathered in the meetinghouse yard early for the sake of friendly greetings before the service, and lingered after the service to share the news of the day and items of common interest. They invited each other to their homes Firstday afternoons and shared the midday meal which was usually sumptuous. They were not ascetic as many people suppose. They had no notion of mortifying the flesh, but regarded temperance and health as synonymous. Plain living was not for discipline but for nurture. They felt that they could accomplish more and enjoy life better if life was stripped of excess and unnecessary baggage, spiritual as well as physical.

Firstday afternoons and evenings were times of sociability for the young people, who played quiet games and enjoyed various recreations. Of course the elderly people protested against the frivolity and worldliness of the young. That has

been a universal phenomenon since the dawn of history. But with the Friends this was more to satisfy their own consciences than anything else. They did not carry it to the extent of interfering much with the reasonable requirements of youth. The young people combined intellectual and social interests in literary and cultural organizations that were often a credit to the community.

Nothing dramatic or outstanding marked my sojourn among the Iowa Friends during childhood and adolescence. Almost any farm boy of the Middle West of that time, drawn at random, would be as good a subject for a biography as I would furnish. Hamlin Garland has written the biography of all of us.

But in a biography of the soul, the most intensely dramatic and significant experiences are often hidden in a humdrum and commonplace chain of events. How impossible it is to look into the inner life and comprehend the exciting drama that is being played out, often to a tragic end, in the experiences of an apparently stupid child.

My physical condition was a major determining element in my career. I was frequently told by the grandmother of the family in which I lived that I would probably die of "consumption" at an early age, since both of my grandmothers and my mother had done so. Why she wished to put such gloomy expectations before a child I hardly know, for she was a kindly soul and would have done anything for me, although we "quarrelled" or disputed more than any other members of the family. I think it was her pious conscience that was responsible, for she was naïve in her piety, as well as in everything else. At an early age I felt quite capable of instructing

her on almost all subjects. I eagerly seized upon every crumb of scientific knowledge that came my way and could not resist the temptation to try to set her right in spite of frequent admonitions from other members of the family not to do so. She was against all "newfangled notions" and regarded learning as a lure that was leading young people astray. I was never loquacious and hardly understand my childish desire to "argue with grandmother". I did not have sufficient respect for her opinions to be seriously disturbed by her dire predictions concerning my future, although she did seem to have facts on her side; three serious attacks of "lung fever" pointing to my probable early demise.

Her antagonism to learning was not shared by her husband. "Grandfather" hungered and thirsted for knowledge and bought scientific textbooks to pour over for his own delectation.

I was constitutionally lethargic (a polite synonym for lazy) so far as physical labor was concerned. I developed a large well-muscled body but my vital organs, especially my alimentary system, were never equal to the task of supporting it adequately. It was always easy for me to "overdo". During the hard working periods of the year I was almost invariably miserable, not quite sick enough to "lay by", but not able to carry on with any satisfaction. I managed to drag along most of the time doing what other boys and youths of my age were supposed to do.

Being of a reflective temperament I began to wonder if such a life was worth-while. I went farther: I began to wonder if the average life as I saw it was worth-while. The economic conditions were such that the ordinary man and woman, work-

ing early and late, by pinching and economizing at every turn could hope to do little more than maintain themselves and the family, with little prospect of putting by much for their declining years. I was ashamed of my dislike for work, but disguise it I could not. Much of the labor was so painful to me that I could not conceive of even a strong healthy person actually enjoying it, in spite of all that the poets and philosophers said in favor of it. I could easily have subscribed to the theological doctrine of labor as a primal curse laid upon mankind.

The farm equipment both in buildings and machinery was painfully inadequate. We had no barn and had to get along with improvised "stables" cobbled up out of poles and straw. They were always being blown to pieces and we had constantly to rush out to mend them in the most inclement weather, and try to save the animals from the intemperately cold climate. We had no floors in the stables; the horses had to stand and lie in the filth and wet much of the time in spite of our attempts to "bed them down" with straw. To keep them clean and presentable with currycomb and brush was impossible. To try to keep the stables cleansed of the accumulating ordure was a task I loathed. "Manure" was one of the most valuable products of the farm, but to haul and spread it on the land was to me about the hardest and most exhausting work in which I could engage.

The "old well sweep" makes a fine picture to adorn books of pastoral poetry and may arouse bucolic emotions in the minds of some, but to me it is more suggestive of backache and blistered hands as it recalls taking my turn at the "sweep" in trying to help quench the thirst of cattle and horses whose consuming capacity seemed unlimited.

The shivering, ill-protected cows would go dry prematurely, when butter brought the best price. Skunks, weasels and other pests were constantly preying upon the poultry — reducing the housewife to tears, as she depended upon the poultry products to help replenish the larder, and occasionally to replace some much needed article of equipment.

Adequate fencing was impossible because of the expense, and the cattle were constantly breaking into the fields, trampling the grain, and in danger of injuring themselves by indulging their intemperate appetites. The house roof would spring a leak; the snow would blow in and lie in drifts in the low garret; life was a never ending and often losing fight with the elements. As we had no barn, the hay and fodder had to be "stacked" and was usually damaged by exposure to the weather. If we managed to grow a good crop the prices were low: it had to be rushed to market regardless of price, to pay debts and because we had no place to store it.

This is a little hint at conditions on the farm during the terribly lean "seventies". There was one thing that always grew inexorably whether anything else did or not. That was the ubiquitous mortgage that fastened its coils around many homes at that time. The ten-percent-interest monster took its relentless toll, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, whether any other bills were paid or not. The number of homes, hopes, lives and ambitions that it relentlessly devoured leaving desolation, despair, invalidism and insanity in its wake can never be computed. Will we ever learn that imposing an inflexible financial system upon highly dynamic and variable economic conditions is putting life into a straight jacket that mutilates or destroys?

We refuse to see the inevitable interaction that exists between theological beliefs and economic conditions. We prefer to chatter in meaningless platitudes about the "spiritual" and the "material", imagining that we are facing reality when we are only piously dodging it. As long as we try to think in absolutist terms — trying to think of God as a perfect being who imposes his inexorably perfect will upon an imperfect world and an imperfect humanity, life will continue to be an almost unrelieved tragedy.

I am glad to say that conditions in Iowa improved some during the late "eighties". Many mortgages were paid off, often however, leaving those who discharged them so broken they could not enjoy the relief. Before rural communities recovered from the "lean seventies" the "lean nineties" with their "cross of gold" and "crown of thorns" were upon them.

I quite early decided that life was not worth living as I saw it being lived by the majority of people I knew. Was there a way out? Yes, I knew that there was a way out, but could I follow that way? I have never been sanguine as to my ability to overcome difficulties and I was not very hopeful then. More often than not my efforts have turned out better than I anticipated. They did then, though it was a long tedious pull.

The way out for me was the intellectual life. I knew that. The joy of my school life was compensation for the drag of the rest of the year. But school days would soon be over and what then? Books opened up a world that was abundantly worth while. A life with books would be heaven! No matter how tired and miserable I was, a book would usually offer a temporary escape that was compensation. I borrowed nearly

all the readable books that could be found in that quiet community — a hit-and-miss lot.

I no doubt wasted many an hour reading that should have been employed in compensating labor, according to the standards that prevailed. I am sure that my foster parents were more lenient with me than many parents were with their own children. Many a time I drove myself across the harvest field shocking or binding grain, when it seemed well-nigh impossible for me to reach the other side without dropping, spurred on by the thought of some book that might possibly be obtained by the results of my labor. A book at the other end of a task was the strongest stimulus I could put upon myself.

Fortunately the man of the family was a reader also. He aided and abetted me somewhat in my quest for reading matter and read virtually everything that I did. Such collusion as there was between us was usually silent and unspoken. The women of the family sometimes questioned rather severely the character of some of the books that came into the house and at times attempts were made to establish something of a censorship, but little came of it.

I had a cousin of the same age, living near, whose interests were similar to mine. What one of us could not think of in the way of securing reading matter the other could, and whatever one obtained was available to the other. I was somewhat reluctantly allowed to have the *Youth's Companion* and he had a similar weekly. These two periodicals were the nuclei around which our self-educational efforts revolved.

The passage of the Homestead Act by the federal government during Lincoln's administration, making free land ac-

cessible to my father and mother in Dakota, was a turning point in their lives. In a similar way the passage of an act by the territorial legislature of Dakota locating the future state university at Vermillion was an important turning point in my life. It made free higher education accessible to me. That was the way out of my dilemma.

When the territory of Dakota was organized there were only three towns of any importance in that vast expanse of bleak prairie, more than twice the size of all New England. Those three small towns were Yankton, Vermillion and Sioux Falls, all in the southeastern portion — the only section at that time inhabited by white people. Of course those three places proceeded at once to pick the prospective public institutional plums for themselves, and to Vermillion was assigned the future state university.

After this purely paper establishment, nothing more was done for nearly twenty years. About the year 1880 a few of the enterprising citizens awoke to the fact that the upper portions of the territory were being occupied rapidly and would soon have a large preponderance in population. They realized that if they were to have a university in fact as well as in fancy and were to retain it at Vermillion they must proceed to bring it forth and to nail it down without delay.

A few of them got together, raised a little money by subscription, employed a man in the community who happened to have a degree, as "President", organized a single class in the courthouse and called it the "State University". In addition to the branches taught in the ordinary schools they started a class in Latin and that coupled with the teacher's "degree" gave it academic standing in the eyes of the people.

The promoters did not rest there. They began to agitate for

a bond issue and soon succeeded in bonding the county for a sufficient amount of money to erect a rather imposing stone building on a campus given by two public spirited citizens. They then went before the territorial legislature asking it to accept the gift of a building, a campus and a "going institution" for the future state. The legislature accepted the gift, appropriated money for an additional building, more teachers and running expenses, and the paper institution soon became an established fact. It was only a preparatory school for several years, until it prepared its own classes for college work and later the preparatory department was gradually abolished as high schools were established in the state.

The new school was situated a mile and a half from my father's farm. That was the crux of the entire situation, so far as I was concerned. As soon as I heard that my brother was a student at the school, I began vaguely to wonder if that was not to be the way of salvation for me. And so it proved to be. The family I was living with agreed to give me my "time" when I was nineteen and a half, although I was supposed to work for them until I was twenty-one. This was evidence of their genuine interest in my future well-being, for, while I worked fairly well on the farm during the thirteen years I was with them, considering my youth and my illnesses, I could hardly have earned all that I received, though the living was frugal indeed.

They gave me the best that they had, including their affection, and I can never be sufficiently grateful for having fallen into so kindly a home during the trying formative period of my life. So the Iowa interlude ended happily.

CHAPTER THREE

Struggle, Triumph, Disappointment, Perseverance

I ENTERED the "University of Dakota" preparatory department (by far the larger part of the institution) in September, 1887. I lived at home doing what work I could on the farm while attending school. My father had remarried, and at the time of my return to get reacquainted with my own people, the family consisted of my father and step-mother, my older brother, my younger sister who was in school, and myself. My older sister had married the son of a neighboring farmer and was the mother of three children. My brother was the only member of the family with whom I really became acquainted during this period, due mainly to my reticence and preoccupation. I do not think that I ever met the others halfway or took them into my confidence as much as I should have done. My brother was one of the first students and one of the first graduates of the normal department of the university, but did not pursue his studies beyond the point of qualifying himself to be a teacher in the common schools. When I reentered the family, an "alien", my brother was teaching school during the winter months and running

the farm during the remainder of the year. Although he was built along rather less rugged lines than I was, he seemed to be strong and tough-fibred all the way through. He liked hard work, soon married, devoted his life to farming and became the father of fifteen children, all of whom grew up to be self-supporting men and women.

I soon found that there was no royal road to learning, and fortunately did not expect any. During the first year, the following was my winter regime. I arose in a cold house long before there was any sign of daylight, did my chores which occupied an hour or so, ate an improvised breakfast, changed all my clothes, walked a mile and a half, sometimes in the face of a stinging northwest wind with the temperature below zero, arriving in time for a seven forty-five class in Latin. It did not occur to me that I was doing anything heroic. It was humdrum in the extreme and I was ashamed of it rather than proud. The only question was, could I make myself do it? It was no harder a regime than that of my brother who, after chores, often rode horse back to his country schoolhouse several miles away, arriving in time to build the fire and have the house warm when the pupils arrived. There was no compulsion upon either of us, save the compulsion of our own wills and desires. No one was forcing me to go to school, nor even encouraging me much of the time. No one was compelling him to teach and farm at the same time. The roads we were travelling seemed to be the only way leading in the direction of our hearts' desires. Any other course open to us appeared less desirable — meant defeat and was not to be considered. We were following what seemed to us to be the lines of least resistance.

If I had been a brilliant student, well prepared for my work it would not have been so hard. I was neither brilliant nor well prepared. I did not know how to study. Up to that time I had only dabbled in subjects that interested me and neglected all the others. Much of the university work was hateful. The study of languages was irksome almost beyond endurance. I had to drudge far into the night in order to pass my examinations. What a wicked waste of time to be burdening my memory with empty word forms when so many wonderful things about which I was eager to learn were waiting for me in the world of life!

For four years I gave four or five hours each school day, all of Saturday and much of Sunday to farm work and managed to get my credits in school.

The almost fatal feature of that period was a severe case of measles which left my eyes in such bad condition that I could scarcely use them at all during long stretches of time. I almost plumbed the depths of despair during periods of silent brooding. However, I managed to go on by changing my course. I refused to study any more detestable Latin and Greek, and spent much of my time in laboratory work which exacted much less of my eyes. I enjoyed this work thoroughly and bless the professor who advised the change and made it possible.

After two years in the preparatory department and two years in college I was suddenly left high and dry by my father's selling out and moving to California on account of failing health. Fortunately, members of the senior and junior classes were sometimes given classes to teach in the preparatory department and I applied for such work. I could have looked forward with some satisfaction to teaching classes in

elementary science, history or mathematics, but I was given a class in English composition and accepted with a heavy heart. English was my *bête noire*. I had completely neglected it in my hit-and-miss work in Friends' School. How I burned the midnight oil, correcting papers; drilling myself in grammar and composition! Whether the pupils learned much or not, I did! I doubt if I should ever have dared select the vocation I did if that drudgery had not been forced upon me. The law of compensation does sometimes work.

During this period I lived in the college dormitory, and found the environment much more congenial. For the first time I seemed to be a part of the institution; I had some vital contacts with the student body.

By tutoring and borrowing a small sum from my father, for which I paid him ten per cent interest for many years, I finished my course, graduating in 1893. No blame need attach to my father for his apparent parsimony. He was facing approaching old age for himself and my stepmother with little to go on. Fortunately he bought a small tract of land in California for his own use which steadily enhanced in value so that he was well provided for in his later years, but he could not (of course) foresee that.

Two episodes in my college days are worthy of record in the story of my spiritual experience. I had the distinction of being leader of the student opposition to compulsory military training, which was introduced into the school at the beginning of my junior year. I carried my opposition so far that I was threatened with expulsion, but having no notion of being a martyr for an abstract principle, nor of giving up the edu-

cation that I was struggling to secure, I was careful to keep within legal bounds.

When I was in the ranks and on the parade grounds I did my best to be a good soldier; but when out of the ranks I missed no legitimate opportunity, through the college paper or otherwise, to express my opposition to militarism. I pushed the right of student free speech to the limit and was something of a thorn in the side of the commandant in charge. My punishment consisted of being kept in the ranks while my classmates were made officers. The only thing this deprived me of was the satisfaction I might have enjoyed of refusing shoulder straps if they had been offered me.

Whether it is the generations of Quaker ancestry in me that comes out or not I do not know, but militarism and ecclesiasticism, which I always classify together, have been the twin horrors that have haunted my life. Imagine how happy I am in my old age with these two monsters riding high — for a final fall I fully believe!

During the winter vacation of my junior year I wrote a story for the college magazine — the only time in my life that I ventured into storyland. It was a story with a purpose. I tried to show concretely that military preparedness was no guarantee against war; that war was the deadly enemy of democracy, and that the then present tendency of nations if continued must bring world disaster and the disappearance of the liberties and opportunities that we prized above everything else.

I ventured into the field of prophecy and the startling thing is that subsequent events brought the fulfillment of my prophecy to a degree that I little dreamed was possible at the

time. I projected myself forward twenty-eight years and tried to portray the condition of the world as I thought it might be in 1920 if nations continued in the direction they then seemed to be going. I stated in the beginning that a great world war had just been fought (1920) resulting in military dictatorship being firmly established everywhere. Our own nation maintained only the forms of democracy, without the substance.

The body of my story revealed how miserably tragic the life of spirited young people could be in a military dictatorship when they were not in sympathy with the established order. I used my imagination freely but could not portray anything half as bad as the condition of dissenters proved to be in the dictatorships of our time. Although military dictatorship has not yet been established in our country, it seems quite possible that my prophecy concerning America may find fulfillment in the not distant future, if the plans that the military pressure groups are now urging upon Congress are carried through. When that time arrives, I wonder if the plight of independent young people will be as tragic as I portrayed it in my story, published in 1891?

The article attracted considerable attention and gave me a reputation as a writer of some power and promise.

The other episode that affected my attitude toward life was a "revolution" in the school itself. The progressive and vigorous young president, in whom everybody had confidence and under whose leadership the school was making rapid growth, came to a tragic death in the Minneapolis Tribune fire during the fall of 1889. A brilliant but self-seeking classmate of his by sentimental and other appeals,

so impressed the local board that he was hastily chosen president, to the chagrin of the members of the faculty who thought that they ought to have been at least consulted in the selection of their leader. If the new man had been a person of tact and real leadership he might have established his place in spite of difficulties, but he seemed to have a genius for antagonizing everybody, students and teachers alike.

The antagonism became so intense that before the end of the second year of the new regime a petition was presented to the regents, signed by a large majority of the students, asking that the president not be retained in office. This action on the part of the students was at least not discouraged by some of the militant members of the faculty. This rebellion was met in the way that small-minded men entrusted with a little authority are likely to meet a crisis. The trustees accepted it as an assault upon their authority and judgment and forthwith suspended a number of the leading students on trumped up charges, not quite daring to deny the "sacred right of petition". The result was that during the next few weeks, everybody from the president down behaved his worst. The authorities vindicated themselves by blindly wielding the axe and summarily dismissing everyone on the university pay roll. The thing that destroyed all confidence in the sincerity as well as the wisdom of the authorities was the fact that several of the positions made vacant were immediately filled by members of the local board themselves! That action so smelled to heaven and raised such an outcry that two of the newly elected members of the faculty later withdrew.

When the institution opened the next fall (it had been closed during the last few weeks of the previous year) the

enrollment had fallen to less than half of its previous numbers. Those whose economic condition made it possible went elsewhere. Those who returned came back sullen and dispirited, because they could not get away. We felt as though we were members of a rump institution without standing and without prospects, a class that had been deserted by some of its best members.

Some of those whom I regarded as the worst actors in this drama were ministers of religion. Others were "pillars" in the church. This helped shatter what little faith I still retained in orthodox Christianity. It seemed to me then, as it seems to me now, that theological dogmas tend to confuse and to blur people's insight into, and understanding of truth and justice.

As to the school, our pique gradually passed. We found that some of the new professors were good teachers and that there were advantages as well as disadvantages in small classes. My personal intimacy with the brilliant and talented professor of English was one of the privileges. His kindly helpfulness and human sympathy were unbounded. Alas, a lack of self-discipline and self-restraint brought him to a tragic end, but not until he had helped many young people find themselves and had started them on the way to a successful life.

I graduated at the end of six anxious years of rather intensive effort. A graduating oration was the last requirement in the small institutions of those days. Many of the townspeople as well as most of the students and members of the faculty attended the commencement exercises, making it an outstanding event. I made a fairly good impression

at my final appearance. "Well, it was his own anyway" was the comment I heard about it.

My anti-clerical prejudices flared up at this point and found rather curious expression. The president of the university made arrangements for the graduation exercises to be held in the Baptist church. I did not want to graduate from a church! I consulted the mayor of the town, with whom I was well acquainted, carefully refraining from mentioning my real reasons, and, as I anticipated, he graciously offered us the use of the town hall. I called the members of the class together and persuaded them to request the president to accept the mayor's generous offer. He reluctantly consented, and we graduated amid purely secular surroundings, free from the odor of sanctity!

I regarded my extra-curricular activities as being quite as important as the required work and often labored harder on them than I did to make my grades. I was a faithful member of a small voluntary debating society, and gained some facility in public speaking. I contributed articles on various subjects, not only to the college magazine but to outside papers as well, and some of them had attracted attention outside the college group.

To the surprise of many who knew me best I selected a semi-religious subject for my commencement address. I did not treat it in the conventional manner. I was critical enough to arouse interest but not antagonism. I tried to be suggestive rather than conclusive and left people with question marks in their minds as to just how "sound" I was.

The reception of my commencement address possibly influenced my final choice of a vocation. I was rather more

mature than some of the others, and had had more experience both in life and in speaking. I often attended meetings of the Farmer's Alliance and sometimes participated in their programs. I am amazed when I look back and recall the subjects that were discussed in those days. Almost every subject that is today considered dangerously radical was apparently discussed freely both in the student society and in the farmers' gatherings. I am afraid that our young institution of half a century ago would be denounced as "red" if it were functioning in the same way today. We seemed to believe in real freedom of speech out on the Dakota prairies.

I do not wish to leave the impression that my college years were years of unrequited drudgery. I had my periods of exaltation as well as my periods of depression. I enjoyed much of my work intensely. A wonderful universe was opening before me and I was eager to know more about it. On the whole I was where I wanted to be, and doing what I wanted to do. That is high compensation even if many conditions are not to one's liking.

To one of my temperament it was inevitable that disappointment should follow graduation. There was bound to be a let-down after a period of intensive effort directed to a single end — graduation. I had thought of college as a possible way out — out of a life that did not seem to me to be worth living. Well, I was out! but where? Out in the great open spaces of Dakota! Out into a chaotic world that cared little about me and my ideals! I was farther out into nowhere than ever before! Into what a dismal "no man's land" the college graduate is often shunted!

For the next two years I was plagued by a sense of baffle-

ment and insecurity. My college education, instead of fitting me for life, seemed to have unfitted me for anything! I had little social intercourse in school and had taken on little of the "polish" that education was supposed to give. I faced almost every situation in a painful state of embarrassment.

My plight was greatly intensified by economic conditions. I was turned loose in the world just as the panic of 1893 struck with full force. For frontier communities, that was the most terrifying of all of our periodic depressions. Dakota was wholly unprepared for such a sudden collapse. Farmers who had "proved up" had mortgaged their homesteads to build adequate farm buildings and to purchase needed machinery and livestock. As the bottom fell out of prices for farm products, they had no possible way of meeting their obligations. The government, instead of pursuing a liberal policy toward those hopelessly involved, pursued the policy of squeeze-and-let-the-devil-take-the-unfortunate.

Many young people abandoned the homesteads they had "claimed" with so much eagerness and enthusiasm a few years before and had worked so hard to sustain, driving back to the older states like whipped dogs to live with the "old folks" until something should turn up. Some sat tight and accepted whatever came with a kind of sardonic stoicism. Those better off made themselves as snug as they could and grimly waited for the atmosphere to clear. A few bought up all the land that joined them at depression prices (almost nothing) and dreamed of what they would do with the riches that would eventually flow from the unearned incre-

ment. Few such dreams ever came true. Nature added her quota to the general desolation with drought and pest. The curse of God seemed to be on the land and many human curses were freely added. The ultra-pious prayed fervently for guidance and were sure that when these "acts of God" had served their purpose all would be well. Revivalists pointed out the one sure retreat.

This was not a very hospitable world into which to usher an idealistic college graduate with no knowledge of what he wanted to do, much less of how to do it. Schools and institutions closed in many places for lack of funds. Some townships refused to levy taxes and drifted along with little or no local government. "Fixing the blame" was a favorite indoor sport, and nothing in the entire cosmos escaped indictment. I could not participate in this pastime with much satisfaction. We appeared to be the victims of a combination of human and cosmic conditions that were too indefinable to be called to account. And to cap it, an affair of the heart that I did not know how to meet depressed me and caused me more sleepless nights than any other one thing.

I did not eat the bread of idleness. I was active all the time. I taught school about half of this period. I enjoyed teaching and hated discipline. In my applications for schools I was seldom asked if I were a good teacher, but always, if I were a good "disciplinarian". That may have been one of the causes for my becoming a liberal minister. I knew that I should not be expected to "discipline" my congregation in the conventional sense; and I knew it would afford me opportunities to do as much teaching as I was capable of doing and of teaching the subjects in which I

was most interested. I have always thought of myself as a teacher, and of my church as a school of life.

I did topographical work for a county map firm until the continued depression compelled them to suspend action, because farmers could not buy maps. I worked in a flour mill until the river went dry and the mill was compelled to shut down. One of my schools closed before the term of months for which I was engaged expired, because there was no money to pay me. I worked in the mud and water helping put in a small irrigation plant for a farmer, but he abandoned it before we got it completed. Jobs seemed to have a habit of disappearing.

My luckiest venture was my melon patch. A farmer had broken up some prairie sod which was lying fallow. I suggested planting melon seeds in the sod. He told me to go ahead and that I could have all that I could raise on the blank place. I borrowed a hatchet and chopped melon seeds into the sod. That was about all the work I had to do with them until marketing time. I happened to guess right for once. The vines grew rapidly, bore fruit of superior quality that ripened early, and as I was almost the only person with melons in that part of the world I had little difficulty in marketing them. I borrowed a tent, a dog and a shot gun and lived in the melon patch for a few weeks. I kept the gun and the dog in a conspicuous place, but did not tell anyone that the pup would not bark at strangers and could not be induced to poke its nose out of the tent after dark; neither did I tell them that I had no cartridges for the gun and would not know how to use them if I had. My Quaker defense worked beautifully and I sold my crop at a good profit. I worked desperately hard in an effort to

produce other garden vegetables for the market, but got nothing. The farmers were always cooperative and helpful — willing to lend me anything they had, from horse and wagon to hoe and hatchet.

During this intermediate, hit-and-miss, experimental period in my life I managed by hook and crook to accumulate enough money to pay my way for three years in the theological school, assisted by the scholarship I was able to secure. It is almost unbelievable how much a hundred dollars could be made to do in the "gay nineties". I found a grim satisfaction in the fact that I had a bank account for the first time in my life and that it continued to grow a little all the time, in spite of the difficulties that beset me. Every dollar was a substantial peg to keep me from slipping into the abyss of despair.

Life was not all gloom during this trying period. I lived in other worlds than the one that was immediately about me, for reading and reflection were avenues of escape open to me from which I obtained much satisfaction. Back of all my reticence was a tough and tenacious ego that seldom failed to assert itself. In spite of much genuine self-depreciation, I had an unusual amount of confidence in my mental integrity. I stood pretty firmly on my own intellectual feet. I was not stampeded by any of the radical movements that were sweeping the land; neither did I take refuge in any of the established orthodoxies of the time. Depressed and discouraged I often was, but always drove doggedly on in the direction of my own dreams. Yet I cannot think back on those times today without shuddering a little, realizing how easily I might have become bogged down forever. The

saving element may be called either stubbornness or perseverance.

The two nightmare periods of my life that stand out in memory are the few months following my mother's death when I was five years old, and the two years following graduation from college when I was twenty-five.

It is a rather remarkable reminiscence, that in all of my long life I have not encountered bad people: they were always across the street, around the corner or in another room. I have never witnessed a serious act of violence or of flagrant injustice. I have never carried a weapon of any kind nor wanted one: I cannot recall a time when a weapon would have been of any use to me. It is marvelous how elusive evil has been so far as any real contact with it on my part is concerned. Virtually all of my troubles have risen out of conditions in which it was difficult to point an accusing finger at anyone and say, "Thou art the man." I am convinced that conflicting circumstances have been the cause of more trouble in the world than culpable guilt. It surely has been so in my life.

CHAPTER FOUR

Groping for a Satisfying Faith — Finding My Place in Life

HOW I happened to become a minister of religion is a question to which I have given much thought, but I have not arrived at a wholly satisfactory answer. The word clergyman is something of a misnomer when applied to me, as I have always looked askance at church religion as being something superficial, resting on unwarranted assumptions.

I absorbed this non-ecclesiastical attitude from my early surroundings, and all my studies and experiences have served to confirm it. The Wilbur Friends, among whom I spent my formative years, would not use the word church when applied to their religious observances, believing that all churches and clergymen claimed something entirely beyond human reach.

Early in the nineteenth century the Society of Friends, like ancient Gaul, became divided into three unequal parts. The larger body, often called "Gourney" Friends, yielded quite largely to the evangelical influences that surrounded them, both in their theological beliefs and in their practices. They began to hold revival meetings and to talk about conversion

and sanctification as glibly as did their Methodist neighbors. Another branch known as "Hicksite" Friends leaned toward the Unitarian position, sometimes even uniting their forces with the arch heretics of the time. Another little group known as "Wilbur" Friends were uninfluenced by either movement and were left in a rather high and dry state of helpless isolation.

I was a member of the "Wilbur" Friends' Society during my adolescent days, attending their school and meetings regularly, and being unacquainted with any other religious institution.

Friends tried completely to de-institutionalize religion, wishing to have a purely spiritual faith. Of course they failed; but holding tenaciously to their ideal for two centuries they succeeded in reducing institutional religion to its lowest terms. Wilbur Friends were the best example of that endeavor in the nineteenth century. They did not attempt to "teach" religion and theology in their schools and meetings to the same extent that other religious bodies did. To them, religion was not something that could be successfully passed around from person to person, like a commodity or a possession. It must grow out of life, emerging from life as the flower emerges from the plant. Hence the all important thing was the cultivation of life.

It is impossible to elucidate the denatured theology of the Wilbur Friends of the 1870s. They themselves could not have stated it in clear-cut terms. The chief virtue of their theology lay in its indefiniteness. They understood the futility of trying to define spiritual realities. The hard-and-fast mechanical scheme of salvation as set forth by the evangelical churches of that time was abhorrent to them, al-

though the larger body of "Gourney" Friends had become infected by it.

Such words as "revival," "salvation", "conversion", "heaven", and "hell" used in the smug absolutist sense in which they were freely bandied about by the evangelicals (even by evangelical Friends) was extremely distasteful to the Wilburs. They could not conceive of a person being "lost" one day and "saved" the next, or as rising to the heights of a heaven of perfection at a bound or sinking to the depths of a total hell in the same way. No one could truthfully say that he was either saved or lost in any complete sense. Salvation was a process not a status. Whoever lived a good life and shared it with others, thought good thoughts and shared them, gained as much salvation as he earned and was capable of experiencing.

But so small a body were these Wilbur Friends, and so great was the evangelical influence surrounding them, that they were in a sense overwhelmed by it. When forced to define their terms in self-defense, they had no vocabulary at their command. Gradually and reluctantly they began to use evangelical terms, though they never accepted them in the complete and absolutist sense of the revivalists. They lived by faith rather than by definition. Such I believe to be a fair statement of the position of Wilbur Friends in eastern Iowa when I knew them from 1873 to 1887.

As I advanced toward maturity I unconsciously acquiesced in the Friends' conception of religion as a manner of life rather than a belief. If I had been compelled to define my position in theological terms I could not have done so. I should have been forced to use evangelical terms that were

hateful to me, as they were to many Friends who likewise felt forced occasionally to use them.

During my childhood days in Dakota, I knew that my father called himself a Universalist, but had not the remotest notion of what that meant. Later, in my Quaker home in Iowa, I would sometimes hear the grandmother of the family (who always spilled the beans if there were any beans to spill) whisper to her friends that my father was a Universalist, in tones that indicated that she was revealing some ominous secret that must not on any account ever be allowed to get out. Instead of prejudicing me against the Universalists, this terrible secret that I overheard had the opposite effect. Much as I loved my foster father and mother, and completely satisfied as I was with my home, I clung tenaciously to the belief that my own father Hodgkin could do no wrong. If he was a Universalist I was sure that it was nothing bad, and I determined to find out about it when I was older.

One day my foster father came home and announced the rather startling news that the boy minister in a nearby village had withdrawn from the Methodist church and denomination, and had publicly declared himself a Universalist. Many years later I learned that that minister was Wilson M. Backus, who was my successor in the Unitarian church in Minneapolis, and whose son, E. Burdette Backus, was my successor in the Unitarian church in Los Angeles. I also learned that two men who were influential in leading the young man astray, were my father's cousins, who had been strong influences in my father's life when he was living in Iowa some years be-

fore. In such unexpected ways do peoples' paths cross and recross.

When I left the Friends' community and returned to Dakota, I was in a state of religious confusion for some years. For the first time I began attending different churches. I also attended some of the revival services that were prevalent in those days. I did not know whether to be more impressed or more shocked by the dogmatic assurance of evangelical ministers who assumed all wisdom and all knowledge concerning ultimate and final things. They never seemed to doubt that an eternity of bliss or an eternity of woe could be determined by a word or a gesture. That we were living in such a universe seemed an awful thing to me but I did not have sufficient strength of mind to stand against it, though I did not accept it.

As time passed and I became hardened somewhat to the changed conditions, I began to wonder if it would be my "turn" to be converted and saved, much as it became everybody's turn to have mumps and measles, or to get married and become parents. The casual way in which many people accepted conversion and church membership as if it were a kind of routine celestial insurance which it was well to have attended to once for all, was not inspiring to me. In many cases character seemed to be little more affected by salvation than by mumps or marriage. Among the students I knew, I saw little evidence of any such supernatural transformation as conversion assumed.

Sometimes, in my weariness, I took it for granted that I would eventually follow the lines of least resistance, be converted and become a conventional Christian. I did not want

to be a conventional Christian but it seemed to be a necessary part of life. It often appeared to be a rather cheap and shoddy substitute for something real, rather than anything real itself. What the reality was that all earnest people were searching for I did not know, but church religion, as I saw it, did not seem to be a satisfactory route to its attainment.

Some of the best people of my acquaintance had not been converted and did not pose as Christian. Their example was a stabilizing influence in my experience. Among these was my father, whose influence was perhaps decisive, though I had to work it out for myself with not a little travail. As I have said, I was never fully acquainted with my father until he had reached old age and we were both living in California, after I had been in the ministry many years.

As time passed and I became familiar with the writings of Matthew Arnold, James Anthony Froude and others, it quite suddenly dawned upon me that I need have no more concern about being converted and saved, since the experiences interpreted as salvation were purely psychological, super-induced by belief in a supernatural scheme of salvation, for which there was no warrant in the natural order of life. The violent and usually short-lived emotional experiences that often accompanied conversion were easily accounted for by the pressure brought to bear upon the convert.

In their testimonies at revival meetings I have heard people dwell upon the wonderful peace and sense of security that came to them when they realized they were saved. I can testify that the greatest relief and sense of security that ever came into my life was experienced when I fully realized that I did not need to be saved — that I had never been lost — that I was inescapably a part of the living universe, and that

I could trust it to take care of me if I functioned properly as an integral part of it. From that time onward I have not experienced a quaver of anxiety as to what should become of me or of anyone else after we pass the portals of this life. I have been doubly anxious as to my influence and the influence of others upon our posterity and the future of the world. That influence has been the entire concern of my preaching and teaching.

As theology passed out of the category of serious consideration in my life, religion seemed to mount in importance. Matthew Arnold had defined religion as "morality touched with emotion" and had declared that "conduct is three fourths of life". Why should there not be religious institutions or churches entirely free from dogmatic theology, whose sole function should be to lift morality to emotional heights of contagion and whose primary objective would be the purification and ennoblement of human conduct? It seemed to me that such institutions were sadly needed, and that such an institution would be a congenial working place for persons like myself, who might preach and teach the higher morality unconfused by theological assumptions.

I had become an enthusiastic evolutionist and for a time I was inclined to test every person's enlightenment by his attitude toward evolution. I had learned from Herbert Spencer's *Data of Ethics* that all moral codes and practices, as well as all religious beliefs and ceremonies, were as much products of evolution as were the organs of our bodies, and therefore must necessarily be in a constant state of flux or change.

Here was a grand new gospel, infinitely more comprehensive than any of the gospels of the past. One should not only believe in evolution, but one must be an active evolutionist,

boosting things along in the way they should go, instead of allowing them to drift in the blind, tragically slow and wasteful way that they had in the past. As man grows in intelligence and cooperative capacity he ceases to be a mere passive creature in the process of evolution but increasingly takes command of the process, hastening it onward.

Another influence pushing me in the same direction was a course of lectures on the great introspective masterpieces of the world's literature, given by our professor of literature, who was a thorough liberal. He began with the book of Job in the Bible, subjecting it to the same critical analysis as he did some of the dramas of Aeschylus, Shakespeare and Goethe. If Job was to be treated that way, why not all other so-called sacred literature? Where was the dividing line between sacred and secular? I decided that there was none.

My studies in history had the same effect, especially a course on the Protestant Reformation. Protestantism, it seemed to me, should have persisted until it reached the logical conclusion of complete private judgment, instead of aborting the way it did; emancipating itself from the shackles of a dogmatic church only to encumber itself with dogmatic creeds even less elastic than those of the church it had repudiated. I wanted to be a perpetual protestant, forever protesting the theological half-truths that were fastening themselves upon us, obscuring the larger truths constantly revealed by increasing enlightenment.

I knew that Harvard University had completely divorced its Divinity School from all church affiliations, making it a graduate school for the scientific study of theology and religion. This was the first time that any school of standing

in America had avowedly taken that stand. It was denounced far and wide as "atheistic", the defenders of the faith assuming, apparently, that divinity should not be subjected to investigation and analysis. I wondered if any theology could survive thoroughgoing, scientific examination!

I had been told that there were creedless churches that required no theological beliefs of members and ministers. I discovered Channing's works and other books of a similar character, as well as a number of tracts published by the American Unitarian Association, stored away in a farmhouse on the Dakota prairie where I was staying. I read this literature with much interest, learning that the creedless churches were mostly Unitarian and that the Unitarian movement was mainly an outgrowth of the influence of Harvard College, where, from the beginning, a greater degree of free investigation prevailed than in other schools. I was also surprised to learn how many of the literary, scientific and historical characters for whom I had great admiration were Unitarian.

I began to wonder if it would be possible for me to study at the Harvard Divinity School with a prospect of qualifying for one of the creedless churches. At first, it seemed like a dream too remote and fantastic for serious consideration. After turning it over in my mind and becoming a little more accustomed to it, I sent for a catalogue, and made inquiries as to whether I could be admitted to the school as a student. I received a very polite reply to the effect that the University of South Dakota, of which I was a graduate, had no standing in the academic world, and consequently I could not be admitted as a regular student. However, if I wished to take the risk, I could come to Cambridge and attend some of the

lectures. If it was found that I was able to do the work I might be admitted as a special student, but could not be graduated or be a candidate for a degree. I accepted this as a polite way of turning me down, the inference probably being that one hailing from the haunts of Wild Bill and Sitting Bull would find little congeniality in the select society of the cultured east.

As a sequel to my first approach to Harvard it should be said that forty years later the Harvard chapter of Phi Beta Kappa initiated me into that scholastic fraternity as an honorary member, acting as agent of the school that had been, in the first instance, declared to have no academic standing.

Harvard was right in shunting me aside for the time being. I hardly know what the effect of a sudden plunge from the prairies of Dakota into the highly charged Cambridge atmosphere might have had upon me. It was better for me to feel my way a little at a time. My Harvard correspondent wisely advised me to get in touch with the Meadville Theological School, suggesting that it might meet my needs better than Harvard.

The institution referred to was a school for the training of liberal ministers, founded and endowed by a Dutch family that had settled in western Pennsylvania in an early day. The members of this family believed that complete religious liberty was the solution of all serious problems, and made this school a perpetual contribution to the realization of their ideal.

It followed the lead of the Harvard Divinity School as completely as it could, except in matters of academic standards. No special scholastic requirements were insisted upon. Prospective candidates must convince members of the faculty

that they possessed ability to do the work creditably and a character compatible with the work of the ministry. No theological tests were required of students and they were free to choose any field of service that appealed to them at the end of their work in the school. Comfortable quarters were provided for students at less than cost, no tuition was charged, and the economic burden placed upon students was small. What more could be asked of any school in the way of freedom and opportunity!

After having turned the matter over in my mind many times and having exchanged several letters with the president, I made the great decision — the most momentous of my life. I decided to cut myself off from the past, travel to a far country, and trust myself to a movement almost unknown to me. I had been telling people for two or three years that "I seem to be more of a Unitarian than anything else", though I had never had an opportunity to attend a Unitarian church service.

What an odyssey that trip was to faraway Pennsylvania! I was leaving behind all of the persons and places I knew. The prairies of South Dakota and Iowa constituted the sum total of my first-hand knowledge of the geography of the world. When I crossed the Mississippi river I felt as if I were entering the domain of ancient history! When I reached Chicago I was fairly overwhelmed with a sense of the permanency of things. It seemed as though those great structures must have always been there. Yet, at that time — 1895 — men and women were living in Chicago whose memory antedated the first shanty erected on that windy lakeside. As a matter of fact, Chicago — the Indian name for "wild onion patch" —

was founded the year my father was born, and he was then a venerable sage of sixty-two.

I embarked upon this strange and, as it often seemed to me, fantastic adventure entirely on my own initiative and responsibility. I sometimes had difficulty in convincing myself of its reality. I did not dare to ask advice, knowing that I would receive only discouragement. I knew then, as well as I do now, that I did not possess a single one of the supposedly essential qualifications for the ministry. I had no social gifts or graces, which then as now were considered the first and most important requisites. I was shy and shrinking almost to the point of paralysis when in the company of more than two or three. By no stretch of the imagination could I be called a good mixer. I have always disliked institutionalism and organization, and have shunned administrative responsibilities and activities, though recognizing a limited need for them. I was completely ignorant of the inner workings of a church society, never having participated in church work of any kind. Last, but not least, I had no religion at all, in the sense in which that word is almost universally used, nor did I want any. Conventional forms of worship were distasteful to me.

My seeking admission to a theological school under such conditions was certainly an amazing piece of effrontery. I regarded the experiment as highly adventurous on my part, and scarcely dared speculate on the possible outcome. Yet never was I more desperately in earnest about anything in my life. I hoped that I might be able to do something that apparently no one had ever done before. And I did it! I became a fairly successful minister, without possessing any

of the qualifications that are almost universally regarded as essential for church work.

My expectations as to what I should find in the school were hazy, but I was in a mood to make the best of what I found. I was tremendously anxious to find a satisfactory and reasonably congenial life work, but I was not looking for an easy berth. I was willing to pay for what I received from life, by giving all that I had in return.

I was not disposed to find fault with the subjects taught, nor with the way they were treated. Theology was for the most part exhibited to us as interesting fossil remains of extinct systems of religion, from which we could learn much in seeking a religion for ourselves. The Bible — especially the Old Testament — was taught as geology was; the various strata, formations, deposits, outcroppings, upheavals and erosions were traced out in minute detail. I devoured Renan's voluminous works and other books of that character, getting my bearings in Bible religion well established early in my course.

There was much non-theological material in the library, which was a boon to me as I found in the best fiction of the nineteenth century the new revelation I was seeking. George Eliot, Victor Hugo, Oliver Wendell Holmes and many others were giving us the new Bible in which I was vitally interested.

Church history, as taught by the able and enthusiastic young man who had recently come to the school, became human history. The search for a better life and the beliefs and practices that would lead to it were the wheat that he was always winnowing out of the chaff of ecclesiastical contro-

versy. Theology was brought down to earth and transmuted into such humanistic subjects as psychology, sociology and ethics.

The lecture system of teaching was overdone in this school as it was everywhere at that time. Students were not afforded sufficient opportunities for self-expression. The Methodist practice of learning to preach by preaching and learning to administer by administering could not be put into vogue in liberal churches to any great extent. Today the training schools for ministers are much more clinical in character, affording students opportunities for real church work before they are turned loose on the world.

The three years at Meadville were the most satisfying of any like period of my life up to that time. I was pursuing the studies I wanted to pursue, learning the things I most wanted to learn, and was in congenial surroundings. For the first time in my life I experienced the startling sensation of being in an atmosphere where heresy was orthodox! One was more likely to be tried for orthodoxy than for heresy so far as the student body was concerned.

No tiresome uniformity existed in the small student body. Far from it. It was a heterogeneous aggregation that came out of a wide variety of experiences and environments. Some of the students came with individual convictions which they were ready to defend against all comers on all occasions. The more bumptious and belligerent ones either soon toned down or took their departure when they found that they could not set the school right.

A few of the students leaned strongly toward orthodoxy. They wished to be as regular and respectable as it was possible for heretics to be. Others loathed all of the orthodoxies

and had an exaggerated conception of freedom. There were many "isms" in the "gay nineties", and they were well represented among the students.

Mental tensions were tremendous in many lives. Two of the student body committed suicide while I was there—both brilliant men. One cut the Gordian knot of entangled convictions in his own room in the school. The other returned to his home town before ending the inner conflict. Such a state is almost normal on the frontiers of life where men and women have cut themselves loose from all authoritative moorings and are trying to navigate the stormy seas of life under their own pilotage.

While those three years of training were stimulating and satisfying in many respects, they were anxious years nevertheless, the anxiety intensifying as the end approached. I entered the school with a full appreciation of my lack of qualifications for the ministry, but fervently hoping that three years might work a marvelous transformation. To youth, three years seem like eternity, and nothing is too great to hope for in that time. Alas, no transformation seemed to be occurring! My disqualifications stuck, and I was more painfully aware of them as the crucial hour of trial approached. I was fearful that I might find myself farther out into nowhere at the end of my course than at the beginning. I knew people who spent their lives flitting from one educational institution to another, always preparing to do something and never doing it. Was that to be my lot!

A sense of my own disqualifications was not the only thing that disturbed me. The way many liberal churches conformed in their service of worship to the usage and language of traditional Christianity jarred upon me from the beginning of

my acquaintance with them. I have never ceased to be amazed at the complacency with which many liberal ministers often contradict in their sermons what they unctuously affirm in their services of worship, apparently being unconscious of the conflict. I confess to a certain amount of guilt in my own practices in this respect, but I was painfully aware of it. Worship has often been a source of unhappiness to me.

While still in the school I was greedily devouring the publications of the Ethical Culture societies. The Ethical movement was dynamic at that time and in the full flush of expectancy. The lecturers were young men who were reaching out in all directions, full of hope and sure that the Ethical movement had a great future. Their utterances were meat and drink to me, satisfying me as did nothing else that was currently available.

I took one of the more progressive members of the faculty into my confidence, asking him if he thought I could serve a church acceptably, either to the congregation or myself, when I was really not a churchman but a secular Ethical Culturist? He replied that, judging by the sermons he had heard me give in the chapel and elsewhere, I was well qualified so far as preaching was concerned — especially if I used good judgment, preaching what I did believe and not worrying too much about what I did not believe. He suggested that I might let the congregation decide what it wanted in the way of worship, as that was its primary concern anyway; and in church work as in everything else in life there must be a reasonable amount of compromise on the part of all. He told me that he should expect me to get along very well, though it would not be easy, and I need not expect to be free from

doubt and conflict in my own mind, as conscientious, reflective persons seldom were. He never knew how helpful that quiet little talk was to me in after years.

Somewhat to my surprise and greatly to my relief, I received several invitations to candidacy and accepted one to a church with a good reputation in a little town in Iowa. I knew the background of life in that part of the world and hoped that would be an advantage. I gave my first sermon in Humboldt while the decisive battle of the Spanish-American war was being fought, off the coast of Cuba. I remained in the community two weeks, meeting the people in various capacities. Soon after my departure, a congregational meeting was held, and I was unanimously invited to become the minister. I accepted without delay, and the next five years were spent in that community — five very busy years, rich in experience, profitable to me beyond compare, and I think in no way detrimental to the interests of the church.

I did not begin my ministry until, in conversation with the president of the society, I had told him in "fear and trembling" that I had no settled convictions concerning God and immortality that I could preach with assurance. I asserted that I was tremendously interested in life and all of its infinite possibilities; that "the more abundant life" would always be the theme of my preaching and teaching. Greatly to my relief and satisfaction he replied that he was glad to hear me state it that way, and he thought such preaching and teaching would be well received in the church and community.

During forty consecutive years in the ministry, following that interview, I doubtless wobbled often and was subject to

not a few vagaries, but I did not swerve much from the objective I set for myself in the beginning. I have always tried to make my church a school of life.

CHAPTER FIVE

Life Begins at Thirty

I WAS past thirty years of age when my active work in the ministry began. A different feeling from any that I had previously experienced came creeping into my consciousness. Life seemed really to begin. Prior to that time I was a detached mote. I did not belong anywhere. I had nothing to offer the world in exchange for a sense of security. I had no bargaining power. I was completely dependent upon the conditions of life immediately surrounding me, but I was not an integral part of that life. I worked harder during portions of the first thirty years of my life (especially during my adult years in Dakota) than I ever did subsequent to that time, but my work did not seem to incorporate me into life in any vital way. My sense of detachment and insecurity increased with the passing years.

For this condition of things no one was to blame. I was simply one of the countless millions struggling for place and position in this competitive life of ours. The marvel to me is that there should be so much kindness, consideration and voluntary cooperation among competitors in the fierce arena into which nature thrusts us. No one attempted to take advantage of me or to treat me unfairly, according to the prevailing standards. I can recall innumerable acts

of kindness and many instances when people, often strangers, went out of their way to do me favors.

A few days after my graduation in Dakota I was in the general store of a prosperous merchant who afterward became governor of the state. He drew me aside and said, "If you ever need a little money to carry you over a pinch let me know: I shall always be glad to help you." He was considered a close-fisted, rough-and-ready go-getter but in this case was prompted only by goodness of heart so far as I can see. I never had occasion to call upon him, but his offer was a distinct boost and increased my confidence in myself and in mankind. This is a sample of the encouragement that I occasionally received from unexpected sources.

With my settlement the process of integration began. I became a vital part of something. The community had need of me. I was honored and respected. People came to me for council and advice. I had something to exchange—something to give for which the world gave me a living and a reasonable sense of security. In short, I had a vocation: something to cushion the falls and accidents that were likely to ensue. Prior to that I was like a circus actor on a trapeze without a net underneath. If I fell it would be serious. But my vocation stood between me and disaster. I might fall and be shaken up and humiliated, but after a little delay I could go on with the game. Other churches would be open to me if I failed in one, and was teachable. I was dependent upon conditions as before, but I felt that I had a hand in shaping conditions.

Humboldt was a little bit of New England transplanted

to the prairie of Iowa, though most of the inhabitants had paused for a generation in the state of New York. The community was founded by the Rev. Stephen H. Taft, a remarkable man around whose dynamic personality and the many plans and enterprises that emerged from his fertile mind, the life of the community circulated for a generation. He was a preacher, promoter, educator, editor, speculator, reformer, humanitarian, adventurer and utopian dreamer rolled into one, and with energy enough to animate them all. He was a disciple of Theodore Parker and enthusiastically championed all of the many "causes" for the perfecting of human life that were in vogue in his time. He was on intimate terms with all of the troublesome reformers who kept the moral and spiritual pots boiling during the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

During my ministry in Los Angeles, I buried several disciples of Theodore Parker who had passed far beyond fourscore years of age. Theodore Parker gave them something that never deserted them. Under his influence they had ascended to heights from which they never descended. They were idealists, every one, but very practical. They were remarkably dynamic and energetic, giving their lives to the unpopular causes of their time. They did not sour because their ideals were not realized, but remained sweet, cheerful and hopefully enterprising to the end. Outstanding among these was this same Mr. Taft who spent the later years of his life in Southern California.

The name Humboldt was chosen in honor of the great German scientist who, Mr. Taft believed, was laying the foundations for a new world life. Sumner Avenue, Garrison Street, Garrett Smith Avenue and John Brown Park are

some of the names that still greet one in this little city, and are reminiscent of what was in the mind of the founder.

Mr. Taft's unbounded faith, hope and courage often outran his judgment. Many of his enterprises failed to produce what they were intended to bring forth, but some of them paid dividends in those intangible values that often flow from noble experiments. His hope, courage and energy never seemed to slacken to the day of his death, which was caused in his ninety-third year by a fall from a tree that he was trimming on his own home grounds in Sawtelle, California — a town he helped establish. I saw him frequently during his last years, when I was minister in Los Angeles. I met him on the street a few days before the accident occurred and he regaled me at length on articles he was writing in support of causes he was sure were rounding into fulfillment. He was as enthusiastic and as certain that a new day was dawning as he was when he started out to establish Utopia in the promised land of Iowa three quarters of a century before! Disappointment never dampened his ardor in the least. A few days later I was summoned by his son (a judge of the Superior court of Los Angeles county and a member of our church) to take charge of his funeral.

For his frontier colony Mr. Taft bought ten sections of land in the uninhabited portion of the state of Iowa, near the confluence of the two branches of the Des Moines River. He was developing his colony and making his plans on a large scale, just when my father and mother were trekking through this large unoccupied area with ox-team and covered wagon in quest of a free homestead in the Dakota Territory, opened to settlement by proclamation of President Lincoln. If my father had gone a few miles farther north he might

have encountered the indomitable optimist. Who knows but he might have caught the contagion and have settled in Utopia instead of pressing on to the grasshopper infested plains of Dakota. In that case I should have been born in Humboldt instead of waiting till I was thirty years of age to be called there to the ministry of Unity Church! In such ways does fate juggle with the fortunes of men.

Mr. Taft chose his location with much care. This was before railroads had ventured that far westward. He believed his site to be a strategic one, and was sure that if it were well handled it would become an important center, rather than Ft. Dodge where a settlement had been already made. He thus planned things on a rather spacious scale. He dammed the river and built a mill to serve the practical needs of the time, and later founded a college to serve the intellectual and cultural ambitions as well.

He served as president of the college during two interim periods, as well as serving as financial agent and chief promotor for many years. To this college he gave his heart, his head and his hands more unremittingly and completely than to any other enterprise of his long career. The patience and perseverance with which he encountered stubborn opposition where he had every right to expect enthusiastic support, is a good index of his character.

This had become history some years before my appearance upon the scene as minister of Unity Church in 1898. Mr. Taft had moved to California before my advent and I did not become acquainted with him till years later after I became a resident of Los Angeles.

Whether it was by a process of selection, like attracting

like, whether something of Mr. Taft's spirit imbued the community, or whether it was due to a combination of many causes, the people of Humboldt during my sojourn there seemed to possess an exceptional amount of hope, courage and self-confidence.

The church to which I was called still bore the name "Christian Union" afterward changed to "Unity". The name indicated the founders' desire to have a creedless church broad enough for those of all faiths, and inclusive enough for those of no formal faith. The intensely orthodox could not long be content in such a church and so other churches were established, but for nearly half a century the more enterprising and forward-looking people of the community nourished their religious lives in this creedless institution.

The number of study classes and small cultural clubs that were carried on in the community, mainly by members of this church, was remarkable. It maintained worth-while lecture courses year after year, which could not have found support in places many times as large. It fairly made me dizzy to try to keep up with all of the cultural enterprises. There was little chance for a young man to stagnate; the difficulty was to concentrate.

There were not less than twenty-five people that I could call upon to help me out in the pulpit if necessary. They would not undertake to give a conventional sermon or to conduct a regular service but they would do something worth-while, and worth-whileness was pretty good religion for most of us. People were not shocked by departures from the regular order of things. The laity carried the evening services almost entirely during the five years of my ministry.

Self-confidence prevailed among them to an exceptional

degree and they often carried through difficult cooperative enterprises in a way that was a credit to themselves and the community. Elaborate musical concerts — "oratorios" and "masses" — were among their many undertakings. When they put on the "Farmer's Mass", as they did several times, Catholics came from far and near, in the horse and buggy age, to hear and enjoy it.

I was wise enough to know that I had far more to learn from them, than I had to teach them, so far as church administration and church activities were concerned and I fitted myself into the work as best I could. It was a boast of theirs, that it was their function to take young ministers and fit them in four or five years for larger fields, and they took much pride in the ministers they had sent on to other places. Some young ministers resented this patronizing interest of the church, but I heartily welcomed it and greatly profited by it. Having had no church experience of my own it was just what I needed.

The attitude of this society toward women, and especially toward women ministers was unique. During the greater part of the nineteenth century the prevailing idea was that women should do the out-of-sight drudgery in virtually all institutions, but the visible administrative work that gave prestige belonged to lordly man. This notion was entirely obsolete in Humboldt. I soon found that the persons held in greatest esteem among the members of the church were three women ministers. The atmosphere was fairly charged with the fragrance of their influence, and their advice was freely sought on all matters. One of these was minister of a very influential church in Sioux City, Iowa; another was minister of an equally important church in Cleveland, Ohio, and

the third was serving a church in Iowa City, the university center of the state. All of them had been intimately associated with Humboldt — as a matter of fact had got their start in public life there.

In 1880 when the Christian Union society was gasping for life owing to a secession from it and the starting of another church, it had the audacity and courage to defy still further the conventions by calling a young woman to become its minister. Mary A. Safford was a rare combination of personal charm, pulpit ability, unbounded enthusiasm and practical common sense — a very unusual combination of cooperative capacities. The people rallied to her leadership and in five years they had built the church into the community with a thoroughness that insured its permanence for many years. At the end of that time she transferred her activity to Sioux City, where she did precisely the same thing on a much larger scale. She was followed in Humboldt by another young woman of equal enthusiasm, and of exceptional intellectual power, Marion Murdock. The people supported her with equal devotion and the church continued with undiminished success until she graduated at the end of five years. After a period of rest and recuperation she successfully served the church in Cleveland for many years. She was serving the church in Cleveland when I first met her at Meadville while I was a student. I afterward learned that she was the first person to recommend me for the church in Humboldt.

While Miss Safford was serving the church in Humboldt, a former schoolgirl friend of hers, Miss Eleanor Gordon, was principal of the Humboldt Public School. She was active in all community affairs and endeared herself to the commu-

nity no less than did the minister. At the end of five years she studied for the ministry, was associate minister in the Sioux City church for a time, and later filled important pulpits for many years in the middle west. These three women to no small extent trained the people of Humboldt in the practice of self-help and self-reliance, and those of us who came later had the benefit of their success.

During my five years in Iowa there were more women ministers in the liberal churches of the state than men. I had been peculiarly prepared for such association by my early environment. Friends had from the beginning of their movement placed women and men on terms of equality, especially in matters of religious experience. They insisted that the inner light was quite as likely to kindle in the souls of women as in those of men, and to deny it expression was to do violence to the holy spirit. Friends always had as many outstanding women preachers and teachers as men. In the "meeting" that I attended during my childhood and youth the two preachers that were universally liked and respected were Rachel E. Patterson and Mary Test. I had grown up with the impression that women were natural teachers and leaders in religious nurture.

Thus, when I found myself one of a group of liberal ministers in which women predominated and held the more prominent positions, the unusual situation did not irk me in the least — quite the contrary. It was through the recommendation of two women ministers that I was invited to the Humboldt church. Both women and men ministers participated in my "ordination". I helped install my successor at Humboldt in conjunction with three women ministers. I participated in an installation service in Perry, Iowa, in

which the women ministers predominated three to one. I was married by a woman minister, and a few years later when my wife passed away it was the same minister who conducted the funeral service. All this seemed entirely right and fitting to me.

I am frequently asked now why the concluding years of the nineteenth century brought forth a group of such exceptionally talented and successful liberal women ministers, while ever since then there has been a decline in their number, and in their success as well. Many contributing causes doubtless existed.

Liberal ideas of many kinds were in the ascendant during the closing years of the nineteenth century, and many liberal movements overlapped. This was peculiarly true of liberal religion and the woman suffrage movement. An overwhelming proportion of the leaders in the suffrage movements were in the liberal churches. Those who revolted against orthodoxy in religion revolted against the orthodox views of women's place in the world. The liberal women ministers were all crusaders in the cause of woman suffrage and a vast majority of the liberal laymen, especially the recent converts, were champions of the women's cause also. In their loyalty to liberal women ministers they were expressing their loyalty to the whole liberal advance of the time. The two movements thus reinforced each other. Many people came into liberal churches through the door of woman suffrage and the reverse was also true. With the success of that cause one of the appeals of the liberal church was gone. Women ministers being no longer on the general liberal firing line ceased to be outstanding and lost some of their enthusiasm. The liberal ministry no longer made the same appeal to women of

unusual talent that it did when it was for them almost the only open door in the entire field of liberalism.

The main reason that women ministers are not more successful today is due to the inescapable fact that organized liberalism is no longer in the ascendant anywhere, but is for the time being in a virtual state of eclipse. Men ministers are not succeeding in liberal churches today. Only a few of the ablest and almost superhumanly energetic liberal ministers, in unusually favorable situations, are able to do more than hold their own. These disagreeable but undeniable facts, plus the widespread prejudice against women ministers that unfortunately still prevails, plus the inescapable handicaps for public life to which women are subject in the very nature of things, makes it virtually impossible for such women as the ministry attracts, to gain or to maintain even a foothold for any considerable length of time. When the tide turns and men once more begin to be really successful in the liberal ministry, there is little doubt in my mind that we shall see more successful women ministers also.

A hiatus occurred in my Humboldt settlement that was of inestimable benefit to me. Near the end of my second year I had a letter of inquiry from a comparatively new church in San Francisco asking me if it would be possible for me to supply the church for a few months with the prospect of a permanent settlement. If the invitation had come from any other place I am sure that I should not have considered giving up my apprenticeship in Humboldt, as I realized how valuable the experience was. But my people were living in California and I planned to visit them during the vacation anyway, so I could not resist the temptation to try my wings

in a city church. I obtained a six months leave of absence and had a wonderful half year. Everything was new and remarkable to me: — mountains, desert, ocean, tropical plants and all sorts of people. I explored the coast quite thoroughly from San Diego to Vancouver, taking a look at pretty much everything. In my backward glance today it hardly seems possible that I could have done so much in six months' time.

I made the acquaintance of a number of ministers and saw churches functioning under varied conditions. My experience in the church was not so happy. I did not know city ways. It soon became apparent to me that the trustees had exaggerated expectations of what a "brilliant young minister" could do. I did not fill the church at once as was anticipated, and so I returned to my Iowa parish, crestfallen and humiliated, but a much wiser person. I received an enthusiastic welcome back and settled down to hard work, knowing what to do. I subjected myself to a regime of self-discipline both in thinking and in expression, such as I should not have done but for my experience. By adding the leaven of imagination to what I saw and experienced and supplementing it by reading I had much fresh material that I could use to advantage. My work took on a broader meaning than it had before.

One of the incalculable influences in my life was that of the Bicknell family. Mr. Bicknell was a large, vital, impressive personality, a man of almost brutal sincerity and integrity, a caustic critic of everybody and everything, often cynical and given to withering sarcasm. He was the "character" of the community, admired and feared to an almost equal

degree. He was an omnivorous reader with an insatiable appetite for facts and with an intense interest in all questions of human life; a lover of nature and in his way a lover of his fellowmen. People in trouble were in the end more likely to go to him than to anyone else. They found a kind, sympathetic and appreciative person beneath the somewhat forbidding exterior, almost invariably proving to be a wise counsellor and a stalwart, helpful friend.

Mrs. Bicknell was as sweet, gentle, kindly and sympathetic a woman as could be found in a life-time. Along with that gentle and saintly disposition was a firmness of character little suspected. This made her the ideal wife for Mr. Bicknell, for she was the one person who could effectively put him in his place when there was most need of it, and no one knew or appreciated this as well as he did.

The four children were all individuals, no two of them being alike. I married Clara Bicknell, the only daughter, near the beginning of my fourth year in the ministry. Three years and three months later, after we had moved to Montana, she passed away. Her life and character, and the inestimable influence that she was in my life has been set forth at length in a memorial volume that was published after her death.

Humboldt did not fulfill its founders' expectations as a commercial center in the new state. One of the consequences was that the college, after doing excellent work and graduating two or three classes, languished for lack of support. Just previous to my arrival it had become a thriving private school devoting itself mainly to commercial subjects and to the training of teachers. During much of my time in Hum-

boldt I gave ten minute chapel talks once a week, usually on biographical topics. This experience in trying to present subjects to young people, clearly, succinctly and interestingly was excellent drill in my work. It must have been quite acceptable to the school, otherwise they would not have kept me at it for so long a time. I could always count on an interested audience at the college.

Although Humboldt did not become an important commercial center, it became something more rare and worthwhile. For two generations, at least, the inhabitants had a hunger and thirst for culture and the more abundant life that was unique. This craving sometimes took naïve forms of expression, but it was genuine. The people were very human with it all. There was plenty of bickering, rivalry and even jealousy among them, but that did not prevent them from working together unusually well in trying to lift themselves individually and collectively out of the commonplace.

For several decades they could truthfully boast that a larger percent of the school population went through the high school and then on to college than from any other community in the state. As the younger generations grew up, few of them remained in the home town but scattered to the four winds. I had a goodly group of former Humboldt people in my church in Minneapolis; I had them in Los Angeles and met them in all of the liberal churches in California. Humboldt and Unity Church may well feel proud of the human product with which it has leavened the lump of western life.

Looking back over my early record I can see little disposition on my part to sink into stagnation. How anyone

could travel as much as I did on so meager an income is one of the miracles that ministers are continually performing. Like the widow with her cruse of oil I always seemed to have enough and a little to put aside for the rainy day. Not only did I make my extensive trip to the Pacific coast but made two trips to the Atlantic seaboard, travelling leisurely over the Great Lakes, down the St. Lawrence River and visiting all important points from Quebec to Washington.

I spent one summer and part of another at the Tower Hill Institute on the Wisconsin River listening to Jenkin Lloyd Jones interpret literature, ancient and modern. His was a strong influence during my apprentice days, both from personal contacts and through his writings, for I was a constant reader of *Unity*, a weekly periodical that he published and edited for forty years. A stimulating pungency and a prophetic element pervaded his writings and utterances that was most helpful to anyone who was capable of criticizing the critic. He was so unique and so erratic in some respects that there was no danger of my becoming a disciple.

Another delightfully profitable experience was listening to a series of lectures at Tower Hill by Henry M. Simmons, who afterward lectured two or three times in Humboldt at my invitation, and who was our guest at the parsonage — as delightful a guest as he was lecturer. There was a scintillating brilliancy, a delicacy of touch and an exquisiteness in his sense of humor that made him an unforgettable character to all his acquaintances. Little did I suspect that I should afterward become his successor in Minneapolis.

I spent six weeks of one of my summer vacations in the summer school of the University of Chicago at a time when its summer sessions were outstanding for the number and

variety of courses offered on all subjects of human interest. A portion of two of my vacations were spent at the Harvard summer school in Cambridge, but one found no such rich field to browse in at Harvard as in Chicago at that time. The vacation experience that registered itself most deeply was the three weeks series of meetings that were held in Boston and Concord in memory of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Ralph Waldo Emerson. I had the privilege of hearing then, more eminent writers and educators than on any other occasion; the subject of Emerson seemed to stimulate them and to call out the best that was in them.

My vacations were the most intensely active portions of the year, both physically and intellectually, but they were recreational nevertheless, for I returned to my work with enthusiasm and purpose, and with an abundance of material that was grist for the mill. A pump does not wear much while there is water in the well, but when the well goes dry it soon cuts itself out.

CHAPTER SIX

On the Heights — Courting the Cosmos

AT THE end of five years' apprenticeship in a unique community on the prairie land, we (two of us now) were transplanted to a community quite as unique, but of a uniqueness of a totally different character. After considerable hesitation we accepted a call to a church in Helena, Montana, and were soon settled in a comfortable apartment ten miles from the "ridgepole" of the continent. Montana is as monotonously mountainous as Iowa is monotonously undulant. The human element was as strikingly varied as the topography.

One of the first anomalies that struck me was the fact that wherever a Methodist Church appeared, a Methodist Church South could be seen near by. The one designated "South" usually bore evidence of being the older of the two. Why was it that in my residence farthest north, the south should be so conspicuously represented? In response to my inquiries the answer was, "Montana was settled by the left wing of Price's army". Translated into historical data this meant that gold was discovered in the mountains during the war of the states and when the southern armies went to pieces thousands of

the young men fled to the mountains in the hope of salving their patriotic wounds and mending their misfortunes by uncovering the magic yellow metal — healer of all hurts. The early settlers were thus men and women into whose being southern sentiments had been burned deeply by the searing iron of defeat and disaster. They had transmitted these sentiments to the succeeding generation and all of the southern patriotic organizations were maintained with jealous care. Happily, little bitterness remained in this sentimental sectionalism. Grand Army men, Confederate Army men, Sons and Daughters of the Confederacy and Sons and Daughters of Veterans hob-nobbed in friendly fashion.

The little city of Helena appears to have been carelessly dropped into a gulch between the mountains. One wonders why a city should be in such a location, and interest is heightened when told that the original name was "Last Chance" gulch. According to tradition a small group of men were returning to Virginia City from a prospecting tour to the north. They were sitting resting, discouraged and dejected, when one of them suddenly jumped to his feet and said, "I'm going to try a few pans in that gulch facing us; it's our last chance!" He soon returned with evidence of "pay dirt". They staked out their claims and it proved to be the second richest placer mining section in the state. Millions of dollars worth of gold were washed out of the gravel where Main Street now is. The name Last Chance stuck, and five story business houses soon replaced mining shacks.

The religious society to which I had been called had just erected a commodious stone building, planned for a variety

of uses, on a conspicuous site opposite the new federal building. The establishment of the society a few years before was the outgrowth of a vacation sojourn in the mountains by Dr. Samuel M. Crothers, then minister of Unity Church, St. Paul. He afterwards became the outstanding literary minister and lecturer of his time, and served the First Parish Church of Cambridge, Massachusetts, for many years.

The membership of the society was conspicuously varied in character and antecedents. While there was a sprinkling of New England people, the peculiar Puritan strain of character and conscience that was so much in evidence in the Iowa community was not prominent. In addition to all of his other enthusiasms. Mr. Taft, the founder of the Iowa community, was a fanatical temperance crusader. It was one of the community boasts that there had never been a saloon in Humboldt county. In Helena, liquor houses and other houses even more repugnant to the Puritan conscience were flauntingly conspicuous. The wide open habits of the pioneer mining days still prevailed. Every person was assumed to have enough character to regulate his own conduct. Two of the leading wholesale liquor dealers and their families were members of the church society and were among its generous supporters, as was the family of the leading brewer of the state. Several liberal Jews were attendants and some of them members. There were professional people, teachers, state and county officials, mining men and the owners of large cattle and sheep ranches in different parts of the state.

We had a considerable number of non-resident members, including the president of the state university and his wife, the president of one of the teachers' colleges and his wife, and a U. S. circuit judge and his family. People of all sorts

of religious antecedents were with us. Soon after our arrival we invited the trustees and their wives to meet us in friendly conference. In discussing our former religious affiliations we found that four or five of the dozen present had been Roman Catholics until middle age. The word liberal had a pretty broad and inclusive connotation in this frontier mountain community.

The mountains got into my system quite thoroughly during our sojourn in Montana — they were so accessible and so friendly in many ways. The city was built around two sides of Mt. Helena, a very convenient little mountain that stood out from the others and arose about 1500 feet above Main Street. One was called a tenderfoot until he had initiated himself into the ranks of the mountaineers by climbing Mt. Helena before breakfast. This was no hardship for me as it meant a climb of two or three miles up a comparatively easy trail that completely encircled the mountain, affording an inspiring view across the Missouri River to the east and over the continental divide to the west.

Professor Shailer, head of the Geology Department of Harvard was a frequent visitor. He said that he had to come to the mountains often where "the wine of life was always on tap". The atmosphere was stimulating and bracing in the extreme — rather too much so for me. I have always been a poor sleeper and I was more restless and "high strung" during my Montana settlement than at any other time of my life. One of my friends would urge me to spend an occasional night in his little cabin high up on the side of the gulch and sleep on the porch under the pine trees. He said that his occasional nights up there brought him a renewal of life

that was marvelous. I tried it a few times and enjoyed it even if I did not get much sleep. I would lie gazing up through the swaying pine trees at the stars wide-awake until near morning and then would go inside the cabin, draw the curtains, to try to get some sleep.

Determined to get the full benefit of intimate contact with mountain environment we joined a small camping party of half a dozen persons during our first summer vacation, and penetrated far enough into the mountains to be cut off completely from sight of or contact with other human beings. We pitched our tents beside a cold mountain stream under the pine trees. One of our group had to work but came out with horse and spring wagon on the week ends, bringing us provisions for the coming week. We enjoyed it very much in spite of our inability to sleep well under supposedly ideal sleeping conditions — beside a gurgling brook and under soothing pine trees. My wife and I were precisely alike in this respect.

Nothing that we had ever seen in all our lives looked so elegant and luxurious as did our home after those few weeks in a purely elemental environment.

I there had my first experience in mountain exploration entirely on my own. A mountain that had snow in its gulches all summer long arose challengingly to the southeast of us. Every time that I looked at it I had an increasing desire to try to surmount it. I spent the greater part of two days skirting around the base, one day to the right and the next day to the left, spying out the route that seemed least difficult. After a day's rest I started out about five o'clock in the morning, well provisioned. I soon left behind the last vestige of a

trail and the rest of the day depended entirely upon myself. Part of the time I was scrambling through scrub timber, but more of the time was clambering from stone to stone on what were called "rock slides". I afterwards learned that this was considered a dangerous proceeding which mountain climbers usually avoided, because the winter frost and snow left many of the large boulders poised in an unstable equilibrium. Blissful ignorance brought me safely through as it has so many times. I preferred the rocks because I could see just where I was — how far I had gone and how far I had to go. I forced myself from the beginning to travel in a leisurely manner, taking "short rests and many". I thus enjoyed every foot of the trip for the weather was perfect and the panorama spreading out around me became more impressive all the time. At the end of ten hours of easy climbing I was on the summit enjoying the exaltation that comes at the completion of a long climb. In my case the feeling of triumph was enhanced by the fact that I had gone "where there was no path and left a trail".

The whole vast state of Montana seemed to be crumpled up around me fold on fold as far as I could see in every direction. On no other occasion did I see so far or so distinctly as I did in that clear mountain atmosphere. Never before or since have I seen so much and so little at the same time — so much that was inanimate and so little that was animate. I could see no indication of human existence anywhere — no sign of animal life even. During my ten hours of leisurely climbing I seemed to have slipped back through millions of years of time. I appeared to be standing entirely alone with the whole cosmos to myself before the final day of creation when animal and human life were called into existence.

I was awakened from my cosmic dream and reminded that I was not the solitary inhabitant of a limitless universe by striking my foot against the tin pail I had brought with me. The lid flew off and there was a bountiful lunch that kind and loving hands had prepared for me. Cold chicken sandwiches restored contemporaneousness at once. I quenched my thirst with the snow water, and bathed my tired feet. After a refreshing rest and more feasting at the cosmic board before me, I was ready for the descent. I selected a much more direct route down and at nine o'clock, sixteen hours after my departure I walked into camp, less tired than I had expected to be, and feeling that it had been one of the worth-while days of my life. I had been in more intimate firsthand communion with the primeval cosmos than ever before and I have had an added respect for it ever since.

The remainder of the summer was spent in a pleasant trip through Yellowstone National Park. The families in charge of the park hotels and transportation facilities were residents of Helena and were members of our church. This gave us some advantages we otherwise would not have had. A knowledge of the scenic wonders of the Yellowstone region was made known to the world largely through the enterprise of Helena men and it became a national recreation ground through the influence of some of her public-spirited citizens. The man who did more than any other one person toward this end was still living in Helena, and strange to say his middle-aged son and daughter, living in comfortable financial circumstances, had never visited the park! How often we see this anomaly paralleled. Many lifelong residents of New Bedford, and even stockholders of the cotton mills,

have never seen the inside of a cotton mill — a sight worth traveling long distances to see; many residents of Minneapolis have never seen a flour mill or a grain elevator except at a distance, and plenty of people in Los Angeles have never visited a moving picture studio. Distance often does lend enchantment. When we visited Yellowstone it was attracting more European visitors than any other American phenomenon.

I am glad that we visited the park during the horse and buggy days and were thus compelled to take more time than is required today. It is not the individual phenomena — hot springs, geysers, canyon falls and lake, marvelous as each of these is — but the way they are all tucked away in mountain scenery that is of itself almost matchless in beauty, that makes every mile of the journey fascinating. We had perfect weather and all things contributed toward making it an ideal outing for us. I do not believe that there is another section where such a variety of unique natural phenomena is set in such enchanting environment and can be seen so easily and comfortably as in Yellowstone Park. It was our last outing together. Soon after, my wife became ill with the malady from which she did not recover.

My next summer vacation was a strenuous one. I was the traveling companion of Mr. Bicknell. He not only had an intense interest in all natural phenomena, but was using this summer for the special purpose of increasing his first-hand knowledge of glaciers. We not only courted the cosmos but tried at times to capture it — and it very nearly captured us, to the point of fatality.

We started from Helena on the fourth of July, stopped in Spokane a day or two, doing a little exploring in the immediate vicinity, then on to Portland, where the exposition in honor of the one hundredth anniversary of the Lewis and Clark Expedition was in session. The one unique feature of the exposition that impressed itself upon my memory was the forestry building and its contents. It was a reproduction of the Greek Parthenon, the trunks of huge trees, characteristic of the Pacific coast, serving as pillars both within and without.

We spent less time at the exposition than in observing the terrain round about: down the Columbia River to Astoria one day, the mouth of the river being so capacious that one does not know where river ends and ocean begins, and up the river the next day as far as the boat would take us, noting the work of the great glacial plow of continental dimensions that had furrowed out the huge Columbian gorge as it broke through the Cascade Range leaving the imposing scenery clothed in marvelous forests; nor did we fail to note how comparatively minute fragments of the continental plow were still at work on the sides of the snow-capped peaks of Mt. Hood, Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Jefferson and Mt. Adams that seemed to fasten the western landscape down like huge jewel headed tacks.

But we were impatient to get to the center of things — to obtain a close-up view of the plow at work. Mt. Ranier was our first important objective, and after a night and a day in the interesting city of Tacoma we started out on a narrow-gauge timber train that wound its way for fifty-five miles through forests and still more forests until we had skirted a portion of the mountain base.

The striking feature of Mt. Ranier is that it rises fourteen thousand feet out of a forest plain. It is possible to encircle it without reaching any considerable altitude. One does not start from an elevated terrain as in the ascent of many mountains — Manatou, for instance, the starting point up Pike's Peak is more than half way to the top. But at Ranier the traveler gets the full effect of this imposing fourteen thousand foot dome from any angle at which he may approach it.

At the time of our visit (1905) this mountain and its adjacent territory had been made a part of our national park system, but the government had as yet done little to improve it and make it accessible. We saw it in the raw and had to try our strength against it. At the end of our narrow-gauge timber railroad, a fourteen mile stagecoach ride awaited us, winding up an easy grade through the foothills. I thought I had seen forests before, but the magnitude and density of this one, the silence that almost made our ears ache, the gigantic size of the trees both standing and fallen, and its untouched character made me feel that I had entered a real forest for the first time. If one were lost in such a forest how hopelessly lost one would be. What an insignificant ant a human being seems to be in such an environment!

From the camp at the end of the stagecoach trip the real ascent began. We had counted on securing horses or mules, but at the last moment were unable to do so. We regretted this at the time, but later were glad that we were compelled to make the climb the natural way. The trail was a fairly good one, as mountain trails go, the weather was perfect, and we took plenty of time, Mr. Bicknell stopping frequently to complete his notes. So many waterfalls, streams and enchanting scenes tempted us to meander and linger, that we

made a long day of what might have been a half-day climb for a hardened mountaineer.

Seen in general outline the mountain is a huge regular dome; but seen in detail it is carved, gouged and furrowed into ten thousand fantastic features — virtually all mountain phenomena being displayed on a gigantic scale. The unique feature is the fact that just where the timber line and perpetual snow line meet, at an altitude of about eight thousand feet, is a steppe or tableland about two miles wide encircling the entire mountain. This is well called Paradise Park for in midsummer it is a huge flower garden, a great profusion of brilliant and various colored wild flowers growing within a few feet of the snow and ice — the melting snow furnishing the perfect irrigation that such vegetation needs. We thus have the spectacle of the vast mountain giant clothed on its lower parts in a matchless skirt of forest green, then encircled by a girdle of brilliant flowers, and above all the great white dome of snow rising six thousand feet higher.

Our objective was not the summit, but Paradise Park where there was a tent hotel, and from whence the glaciers can be observed to best advantage. While the circular plateau is distinct and fairly regular in its general features, it is gouged and eroded into marked irregularities in its details. The great glacial gorges, of which there are twenty or more, cut through the plateau and the glaciers pursue their way several miles farther down the mountain sides. The glaciers thus hang down the mountain sides like ribbons of ice, or like the frosting of a cake that trickles down its edges. From Paradise Park we therefore take the glaciers in the middle and can either trace them upward into the snow field where they are

formed, or downward until the melting process converts them into mountain streams of almost milk white water.

Glaciers are not strips of ice that are pushed down the mountain sides, but streams of solid ice that flow through the gorges by their own momentum. They flow faster in the middle than at the margins and at the surface than at greater depths, and where the gorge widens they spread out into a glacial lake with a distinct current through the middle. Where the gorge narrows and becomes more precipitous it forms a rapids or even falls.

The Nesqually glacier (one of 23 on the mountain) affords unusually good opportunities to study varied glacial phenomena. It is a small dying glacier in which many processes can be easily seen within a distance of a few miles. From the vantage point of one of the old lateral moraines towering far above it, showing how much it has shrunk, one can see it emerge from the snow field, then expand into a glacial lake and farther down crowd through a steep narrow gorge in a glacial rapids. All varieties of crevasses are seen, some narrow and deep, and others wide open as it passes over a ledge. The glacier carries great numbers of large boulders and much sediment that it has ground off the headlands as it makes its way around them.

Employing a guide and renting some spiked boots we ascended one of the glaciers far into the snow field, observing how it was formed and how it gathered its debris. We were warned of the danger of falling into concealed crevasses that are covered by fragile "bridges" of snow and ice.

We made inquiries as to whether we could clamber down the Nesqually glacier to its foot, follow the stream to the

bridge we had crossed on our way up, and there take the trail back to the camp from which we had started the ascent. No one in camp seemed to know and we decided to find out by doing a little exploring on our own account. We started out very early in the morning doubtful in our minds as to how far we would go. We clambered down over the rocks on the half-dead moraine, farther and farther, always wanting to see what was beyond the next obstruction.

Finally the thought of climbing back over those slippery rocks up the steep gorge seemed so appallingly laborious, that we decided to go on. It was not difficult clambering down the melting lateral moraine, the ice being covered deep with rocks and debris. But when the glacier ground around perpendicular headlands we were obliged to venture out on to the glacier itself. It was very hot in that narrow gorge with the sun almost overhead. The surface was melting fast and the fine sediment made it about as slippery as if covered with soft soap. Wide open crevasses yawned all around us. If we had been properly shod, as we were the day before, the serious danger would have been almost eliminated, but we had only our smooth leather soled shoes. Twice we were obliged to slide down the perfectly smooth ice into a crevasse that opened at an angle of about forty-five degrees. The crevasse was filled up two or three feet deep with rubble, so we had good footing once we were down there, but by no possible means could we have climbed back up that smooth ice surface. The only way out was onward. We guessed from the diagonal direction of the crevasse that we could follow it out to the edge onto the moraine below the headland. Fortunately we guessed right both times, but what chances we were taking! We made

ourselves believe that we were near the foot of the glacier when we decided not to try to go back, and that the worst was really over. It may not have been a great distance by ordinary measurements, but measuring it by our means of travel it was at least five times as far as we thought it could possibly be! Our greatest immediate danger was from rocks loosened by the heat that slid at terrific speed into the crevasses that we occupied.

We did eventually reach the foot, and how unique it was! The foot of all other glaciers that I have ever seen consisted of a thinning out of the ice until it disappeared in a stream of milky-looking water. But the foot of this glacier was very thick and overhung in a threatening fashion. The turbulent stream emerged from a dark cavern or tunnel in the middle. We soon found that we must not venture too near the foot, as it seemed to be angry and threw stones at us. This meant that the hot weather was dislodging the stones on the surface of the ice and they slid down at a terrific speed over-shooting the terminus by several rods before they landed. A crescent-shaped moraine at least ten feet deep had been built up by the stones that were thrown off in the way that we witnessed. I had a small camera with me and have pictures to illustrate what I have said of this adventure.

Leaving the glacier behind we assumed that our troubles were over and that we should have smooth going the rest of the way. Not so. The most dangerous part of the route was past, but the more laborious, wearisome and patience-testing part was yet to come. We could skirt along the banks of the plunging stream much of the time, but the grinding sounds of the boulders that were being driven along the bottom of the fast swelling torrent was an eloquent reminder of what

would happen to us if we should fall into the water. When the stream swirled along a precipitous cliff we were dismayed. It meant that we must climb several hundred feet upward over the rugged rocks and what was often worse we must struggle through what seemed to me to be the scraggiest, thorniest mesh of underbrush I had ever encountered. We thought that each climb would bring the bridge into view. Disappointment after disappointment was our lot as headland after headland barred our way necessitating another wearisome climb. We began to fear that we were in the wrong gorge and were wondering where we would come out, or whether we should come out at all, when suddenly the bridge appeared just ahead of us, as thick darkness was settling down at the end of the long summer day. Crossing the stream on the bridge and following the trail we soon arrived at the camp where we had stayed over night a few days before. As we dragged ourselves into camp after seventeen hours of the most strenuous activity I had even known, I experienced that strange feeling of exaltation and utter weariness that comes to one occasionally. After a few days' rest I was little worse for wear, thanks to the fact that I had been living an active outdoor life for some time previously.

Ranier was only the first leg of our summer's "gunning for glaciers". While glaciers were our chief quarry, we were eager for any cosmic game that might be bagged. A delightful steamboat ride to Seattle, a day in the metropolis of the northwest, and we were off for a three weeks' cruise to Alaska and back through the inner passage. A sail up Puget Sound to Victoria on Vancouver Island with snow-capped Olympics on the west trying to out-gleam the snow-capped

Cascade peaks on the east, was an inspirational start on that perfect summer day. The weather during the entire cruise could hardly have been improved upon if we had ordered it in advance — a little fog while at Sitka was the only variation.

A few hours at Victoria — then more English than England, just as Quebec was more French than France when we first visited it, was a good prelude to the journey. Islands, islands, islands; bays, inlets, estuaries, sounds great and small; mountains, snow-capped mountains; and still more of everything scenic *ad infinitum*, is a good summary of the excursion. When all other summer places have grown tame, this vast fringe of mountain-island terrain will furnish enough newly interesting summer resorts for a large part of the human race, and if the means of travel continues to improve it will be accessible for week-end visits from almost anywhere. Nature gently breaks its panoramic views to us, for the scenery grows continuously wilder and more impressive during the seven days' meandering through the winding course to the abrupt end of the watery trail at Skagway.

It was in Alaskan waters that we saw glaciers from a different vantage point: saw a swift one flowing into the sea. As we approached the foot of this glacier in a small row-boat we had to beware. It did not throw stones at us as the Nesqually glacier did, but it threw small icebergs that rocked the boat in such a way that we could literally say we gained a nodding acquaintance.

Our small excursion steamer turned out of its course and steamed up a wide inlet. We soon began to see floating fragments of glacial ice. These became larger and more numer-

ous until some of them were as high as the deck of our steamer, licensing us to call them "icebergs". They had all of the fantastic sculpturing of the full-grown Atlantic variety. We could see the gleaming front of the glacier from which the ice was being discharged several miles away, stretching across the head of the inlet.

The vessel steamed slowly on and on. The day, Sunday, seemed to have been made to order — a bright cloudless sky and complete calm. This enabled the steamer to creep up to within a quarter of a mile of the ice front — nearer than usual. The sailors lowered two or three of the boats and some of us were permitted to row up somewhat nearer to the ice front and to inspect the small icebergs at close range. The ice front was about a mile and a half wide and presented a precipitous front about one hundred and fifty feet above the water. It gleamed in the sunlight in fascinating fashion and large fragments of ice kept breaking off and crashing into the water with a sound that echoed back and forth among the mountains in a weird and mysterious fashion. A blast from the steamer's whistle caused many fragments of ice to fall simultaneously with a roar, and our little boats bobbed up and down in a thrilling manner. A number of pictures of the ice front and of the small icebergs were the mementos I brought back with me.

The Klondike gold rush had subsided only a short time before our excursion, and the Fairbanks region was still expanding. All along the route reminders of the mad scramble were visible. Of all kinds of insanity the gold craze drives human beings to greater extremes of reckless abandon

than any other, when once it takes complete possession. Never before had the gold craze driven men into what appeared to be such utterly inaccessible territory. The whole snow-clad, mountainous coastal section of Alaska seemed designed to bar man's access to the dreary interior that waited to freeze and starve him should he have the hardihood to scale the barrier.

Each landing place aspired to be a gateway to the new Eldorado. Wharves were hastily erected and men landed their equipment and rushed up the mountain gulches oblivious of the great distances to the promised land and equally oblivious of how false many of the promises would prove to be. We could see the wreckage of those rotting wharves reminding us how futile were the hopes of those who built them.

The gateway finally chosen by a process of natural selection and tragic elimination, was the pass above Skagway and a narrow-gauge railway was built over the mountains; but long before that consummation, the mad rush had largely spent itself and many a lonely gulch was whitened by the bones of horses and humans who had started with high hopes for the diggings and were never heard of again.

We travelled up that narrow-gauge road to the international boundary. As we wound around, and shuttled back and forth, I tried to imagine the difficulties encountered by those who first tried their strength against it. The gulch immediately below the winding railway was called "dead horse canyon" because of the great number of horses that had slipped off the treacherous trail and whose bones were bleaching in the gulch. As I looked at that apparently insur-

mountable mountain barrier I could well believe that "the sane turned back and only the insane went on".

I shall not enter into competition with the many excellent guidebooks of Alaska by any detailed description of our trip, much as it meant to us. I cannot refrain from attempting to describe a kind of color delirium that we experienced on our return voyage, though I know that it is indescribable. We were sailing through a large circular bay entirely surrounded by mountainous islands many miles from us. It was perfectly calm and as the evening sunlight reached a certain angle the entire surface of the water gradually changed into a huge blanket of shimmering changeable silk, more intensive and extensive than anything of the kind I had ever seen before. This vast colored canvas was enclosed in a circular frame of dark green forest that reached up the mountain sides about half way; above that was the ring of gleaming snow-capped mountains, and over all was one of the most brilliantly colorful cloud effects I have ever witnessed. The sea floor and the sky-ceiling seemed each to try to outdo the other in color panorama, and both, encircled in the dark green and snow white frame, produced an effect that is indescribable. Any one of these effects alone would have been uniquely striking but the combination was almost overwhelming. The long drawn out northern twilight caused this scene to persist for a considerable length of time. As one gazed in speechless awe, it seemed at times to cease to be objective and one had the sensation of being almost choked in a fog of color that interpenetrated everything. So vivid was the effect that we seemed to be almost color blind for a time after it had passed.

I felt that we had been treated to a display that nature was not likely to repeat in the span of a lifetime.

I was fresher and more impressionable in 1905, than I was twenty-three years later when I saw Norway with eyes more passe. This makes any comparison of the two on my part of little value, but my picture of Alaska is much the more vivid of the two, after all the intervening years. Norway is old and grizzled, geologically and in all other respects. Everything is weathered into rounded, graceful curves and is subdued in color, while the Alaskan coast is harsh, sharp, angular, precipitous and often garish in appearance. Norway appeals to the artist who looks for finish, stability and harmony; while Alaska interests the scientist who searches for process and action in nature. Norway seems to be at the end of a geological period, while Alaska is near the beginning of one.

The fact that human habitations of long duration are tucked away among the Norwegian fjords adds poetry to the older scene, as do the history and legendary lore associated with it.

We landed at Vancouver on the mainland of British Columbia. As Victoria, on the island across the channel, was more English than England, so we found Vancouver to be at this time almost more American than America, in the hustling, bustling boom spirit that prevailed. We returned by the Canadian Pacific, stopping a night and a day at each of several places to take in the points of interest. The Canadian Rockies have been described so often that I will pass them by, except to say that at Glacier we secured a guide and made a day's excursion far up onto the snow field. It was more

of what we had seen before. It is a comparatively clean glacier, and carried little rubble, which made it less interesting to us, rather than more so.

The hotels were crowded with tourists and excursionists and we attracted undeserved attention by our glacier interests. The general opinion was that it was well enough to pat the monster on the nose but to do more was to be in danger of being devoured. To my surprise one of the tourists afterward told me that the entire hotel company was uneasy and all breathed a sigh of relief when they saw us descending in the evening. I found that same attitude prevailing among tourists when I visited glaciers in the Alps a few years later. To depart a step from the prescribed path was thought to invite destruction. Guides encourage such a feeling. At the "Mer de Glace" the guides made us think that we could not even follow the well-beaten path without their assistance. We could have gotten along much better alone. All they did was to rush us along so fast that we did not see much, in order that they might get back as soon as possible and hook on to another group of suckers.

All other glacial explorations have seemed tame in comparison with our adventure on Nesqually. If one wishes to study glacial phenomena in nearly all their varied forms, there is no better place than Mt. Rainier — and what an incomparably fascinating setting it offers.

During my residence in Montana the influences that dominated the state emanated from the city of Butte. In this mining city heaven and hell were in close literal contact. My first glimpse of it (1903) vividly suggested the traditional inferno. I looked down upon a broad valley from the sum-

mit of the continental divide. Over the valley hung a pall of green and yellow smoke. A sulphurous odor began biting into my nostrils. All about me was death and desolation: ghostly statues of trees of all sizes, some of them standing with tops blown off, but more of them lying in criss-cross entanglements. Every sign of living vegetation had disappeared for a radius of many miles. Dead forests desolated the mountain sides as far as one could see. The chemical fumes had wrought this havoc that assaulted our nostrils, and were issuing from great ovens below us. The human animal was about the only living thing that could survive and thrive in such an atmosphere! And the cause of all this, was man's insatiable desire for quick possession of those metals that have both blessed and cursed him from the beginnings of civilization. From this hill, within the span of my memory, has flowed not less than one billion five hundred million dollars' worth of metals into the marts of trade and industry.

In the early days of the territory enough gold was panned out of the gravel in the gulches on the side of the hill to make it a paying camp, although it was poor pickings in comparison with the diggings in the Alder Gulch and Last Chance Gulch. The placer deposits were soon worked out and gold mining was languishing when it was discovered that deeper down lay rich silver deposits. This required more capital, which was readily forthcoming, and the unusual yield of the white metal put Butte distinctly on the map of the world. As the demand for silver declined it looked as though Butte would become one of the abandoned ghost cities of which there were so many in the western states.

Then apparently inexhaustible copper deposits still deeper down were discovered. This was at the beginning of the electrical age, in which the demands for copper were to exceed all expectations. Much capital as well as much labor were required to bring forth the ore and smelt it in paying quantities.

Then began the "battle of the giants", the struggle of the money magnates for control of this continuous and expanding stream of wealth. The Clark-Daley feud and the violence that accompanied it in the "eighties" and "nineties" is history. It was composed by an amalgamation near the turn of the century and it was thought that the monopoly was complete enough to make clear sailing for the magnates.

In the meantime a young graduate of the Columbia School of Mines named Heinze had obtained a position at a small salary with one of the mining companies. He used his time and his opportunity to study the whole layout and soon knew more than anyone else as to just where the copper was and how most easily to obtain it. He began chiseling in, both literally and figuratively, by fair means and foul. The magnates resorted to the methods that usually put the quietus on such "upstarts"; but he was more than a match for them, and after a few years of furious fighting, underground and over ground, in the courts and in the legislature, with both legal and material weapons, the Amalgamated was glad to buy him off for seven million dollars cash!

I was in Montana when this feud was at its fiercest. Heinze was at the height of his success then, and was regarded as a miracle man. I saw him and heard him frequently in Helena — a magnificent specimen of physical and mental power.

Something approaching actual warfare was not infrequent

in Butte — clashes of miners both underground and above ground — tunnelings under, and mysterious explosions. Lawyers reaped bountiful harvests. Courts were choked with litigation both in Butte and in Helena. I spent several half-days in court listening to lawyers and witnesses, trying to get some understanding of the issues. Politics played a part of course. Whether you were Democrat or Republican mattered little; whether one was a Heinze man or an Amalgamated man mattered much. I fished in the troubled waters a little in my own interests. We were adjusting the debt on the new church and I was nervy enough to solicit some of the "interested parties", who "gladly" contributed to the cause.

After I went to New Bedford, Massachusetts to live, in 1920, I was surprised to find how some of my experiences there tied in with my earlier experiences and observations in Montana. The beautiful Unitarian Church in Fairhaven — a residential suburb of New Bedford, was the gift of Henry H. Rogers, who spared no expense to make it the finest piece of church architecture in America. His many contributions to charity and education cause him to be regarded throughout the east as one of our great benefactors. I preached in that beautiful edifice many times while I was in New Bedford, but could never quite forget that the benefactor who gave it was the head of the Amalgamated Copper Company while I was in Montana, and was then regarded as the most wolfishly unscrupulous ravager of nature's bounty to be found. Like Pericles of old, who stripped the provinces of their wealth in order to adorn his native city of Athens with those ravishingly beautiful temples and art treasures that have been the wonder and despair of all generations since,

so this modern industrial ruler was willing to rape the (wild and woolly) west of its treasures, in order to adorn and enrich the east, that already had more than its share of the adornments and luxuries.

“In men whom men condemn as ill,
I find so much of goodness still,
In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot
I hesitate to draw the line
Between the two; when God has not”
(Joaquin Miller)

Aside from the tragic loss that came to me, life in Montana was pleasant and satisfactory. The somewhat isolated situation of these mountain centers gave the people a self-reliance and an initiative that was stimulating. They were cordial, loyal and generous. Personal friendships were deep-seated and dependable.

Our intellectual interests did not flag. We organized a Unity Club for a study of “The Men Who Made the Nation”, giving special attention to the religious and cultural interests of the nation builders. The group usually met in our rooms. I also had a group for Bible study that attracted some who were not affiliated with our society. A group met in our rooms once a week to read and discuss philosophy. We spent most of the time on Josiah Royce’s *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*. We were also active members of a travel club that studied foreign countries. The problem was always one of being able to find time to take advantage of the opportunities that were available.

I lived on good terms with the other ministers of the city and had a wholesome fellowship with them. The newspapers were friendly and published many of my sermons almost in full. As the papers had a wide geographical circulation this put me in touch with other communities and it was surprising how many invitations I had to speak to schools and cultural groups outside the capital.

The church work as a whole was stimulating and challenging. The congregations were good as liberal audiences go. It was of a character to demand the best that I could give. There was no danger of my talking over their heads as long as I really had something to say. My book knowledge was always acceptable provided I had really assimilated it myself and could transmute it into human values.

It was a man's church. The women's organization was not strong in numbers or in cultural activities, but the amounts of money that little group could produce when they put their shoulders to the wheel was phenomenal. It was a man's city, of course, men being drawn to the capital from all over the state. We had more than our share of the young people and the children of the community in our church school, owing to the attractiveness and energy of some of our officers and teachers.

Many of the pioneers of vigilante days were still living, and were fond of reminiscing, and no doubt of exaggerating. My contacts with them were mainly in the Masonic Lodge. I greatly extended my acquaintance over the state by my activities in that order, it being unusually strong and influential. I was never active in the fraternal societies after leaving Helena, apparently for two reasons, neither of which were very satisfactory ones.

In Minneapolis and Los Angeles other organizations in which I had a greater interest were allowed to crowd the lodge out. Probably the chief reason was that the orthodox character of the ritual irked me. Ritualism and institutionalism of all kinds have always wearied me unspeakably. My withdrawal from the two fraternal orders to which I belonged in the early days of my ministry was probably a mistake as I have always been prone to be too much of a recluse.

What was the net effect of this sojourn among the mountains — these contacts with the cosmos — upon my religious faith and practices? It strengthened the tendency of my nature since my earliest memory — the inclination to repudiate all of the assumptions on which the dominant religions of the world rest — the assumption that a perfect God creates an imperfect world and punishes the imperfect creatures that he creates for their imperfections — imperfections for which he and not they are responsible. Theology has been running in this tragic circle, in one form or another, ever since it appeared in the world.

I would throw over all assumptions concerning ultimate beginnings and ultimate ends. They are utterly beyond us and are a virtual denial of life itself. Such assumptions only blind us to the available realities that we can partly comprehend. We see all about us process and change. We can see the general direction of processes and changes. They clearly indicate that out of chaos emerges cosmos: out of cosmos proceeds life: life tends to become more orderly, and we are justified in believing that if we do our part, human life may become sufficiently orderly and self-sustaining to be called divine life, though always incomplete and imperfect.

Divinity * thus lies before us; is something to be realized rather than something already existent. We help bring in that divine life by our creative activities. Every creative action makes us a vital part of the onward process and by our own acts we may progressively lay hold on immortality.*

*I do not use the words "divinity" and "immortality" in any absolutist sense, but only as necessary words to express the onreachings of life.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Accepting a Challenge

DURING the spring of 1905 I received a communication from the pulpit committee of the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis asking me if I could preach for them two or three consecutive Sundays as a candidate for the pulpit made vacant by the recent death of their beloved minister Henry M. Simmons.

I was thrown into turmoil. I wanted to go to Minneapolis as much as I ever wanted to do anything in my life. I regarded Minneapolis as the most progressive and wide-awake midwestern city. It had a large New England element in its population, and the foreign portion was progressive, enlightened and readily Americanized. It was the seat of the state university which stood at the forefront of institutions of its kind. It seemed to me that a person, western-bred as I was, could hardly find a more desirable place in which to do a lifework.

The society appealed to me also. I had preached in the church a time or two in exchange with Mr. Simmons and thus was not a total stranger either in the church or the city. I not only admired Mr. Simmons but had a genuine affection for him, as everyone did who really knew him. To lis-

ten to his addresses, as I had done many times, was one of the delights of my life. They were both informative and inspiring; pervaded by a rare literary flavor and a delicate sense of humor that was delicious and refreshing. To be his successor, to be able to preach to his congregation at all acceptably would be a real achievement and a rare privilege.

The society was non-theological. The character of the church building indicated that. It was an expensive red stone structure of unique design. Baedeker listed it as one of the few buildings in Minneapolis that visitors should see for its architectural features. Strangers seldom passed by it without looking it over questioningly. It plainly housed a cultural institution of importance — but what? Few would guess that it was a church, and it was not a church in any ecclesiastical sense. Seldom has a building expressed the unique spirit of the institution it housed more perfectly.

I cannot pass the corner of Eighth Street and LaSalle Avenue where it stood, or see a picture of that building among my possessions, without a little lump rising in my throat. It was so well located for all time that it seems something of a tragedy that it should not perpetually serve the purpose for which it was built.

On the other side of the scale were weighty considerations. The memory of my San Francisco experience made me cautious — perhaps timid. I knew that I was still in the apprentice stage. I doubted if I had myself sufficiently in hand to venture into a city. Three or four years more where I was would give me confidence. I was old in years, but ten years late getting started in life. Helena city, and the Helena church seemed to be about my size. I apparently fitted into

the situation there exceptionally well. The people had been so kind and considerate in every way during a great emotional crisis in my life, that it seemed like ingratitude on my part to be willing to consider an invitation to go elsewhere. Helena was so far away from everywhere that it would be difficult for the church to secure a satisfactory successor.

Mr. Simmons' congregation was invariably spoken of as being exceptional in intellectual and cultural attainments; consisting mainly of professional men and women who were on the march — people unsatisfied with the present order and strenuously searching for something better. They were extremely individualistic. Could I lead such a group as that? When I thought of them comparing my immature creations with the artistically finished and scholarly, mature productions of Mr. Simmons — when I realized how critical they were likely to be both as to form and matter, my courage faltered.

Other disconcerting conditions confronted me. The church building had been erected during a real estate boom and had been underwritten by two men who were rated as millionaires. A collapse of the real estate market reduced these men to bankruptcy, and the church society was saddled with a heavy debt. Moreover, during the quarter century of Mr. Simmons' ministry, his deafness had steadily increased, until during the latter part of his incumbency it was difficult to converse with him orally. This affliction, added to his shy and retiring disposition, made him an almost complete recluse. So fearful was he of becoming a burden that he discouraged any activity in his behalf — especially in the solicitation of funds. His formerly fine voice became metallic, his pleasing delivery became so monotonously mechanical,

that listening was rather painful and difficult for those unaccustomed to him.

I well remember the last time I saw Mr. Simmons. It was less than three months before his death, and he and everyone knew that the end was near. I was returning to take up my work in Helena after my sad mission to my former home in Iowa, and I hunted up Mr. Simmons as I always did when passing through Minneapolis. How his face lighted when he saw me! Almost his first words were, "You can stay over and preach for me Sunday can't you?" What a burden the weekly sermon had become; and yet it was the last thing he wished to drop, as it was the one remaining vital function in life. I was obliged to take the next train. During the short visit we had he was as cheerful and interesting as ever, though the lines of suffering from internal cancer had cut deeply into his fine features. As I write these words it is difficult for me to realize that he was then much younger than I now am.

This combination of adverse conditions caused the congregation to dwindle and church activities to languish. Mr. Simmons was still admired and greatly beloved by many people, but in the hurly-burly rush of things he was forgotten by many and neglected by all but the ever faithful few. He had served the society from its beginning and it was better known as Mr. Simmons' church than by any other name. I assumed that love for the minister was about the only bond of union in the society and that his highly individualistic following would scatter when he was gone.

The thought of stepping into a situation so appallingly difficult, caused me to write to the pulpit committee thanking them for inviting me, but declining to be considered even

as a candidate. I did not want the kind people of Helena to think that I was flirting with any other position.

I assumed that the incident was closed, and was surprised later to receive letters from denominational headquarters in Boston, Chicago and St. Paul, asking me to reconsider the invitation to candidate in Minneapolis. I also received another letter from Professor West in behalf of the Minneapolis society, saying that they would do the candidating if I would come and fill the pulpit for half a month. Vacation time was then at hand and I agreed to spend two weeks of my vacation in Minneapolis. This would relieve me of the necessity of consulting the Helena church. As I had little expectation that anything would come from my candidacy, I did not want to introduce a disturbing element in our relationship.

Although my visit was in midsummer, after the church had been closed and all activities suspended for several months, I was surprised at the size of the congregation that greeted me and the hearty welcome that I received. Apparently a goodly number of people were disposed to stand by the society.

The Minneapolis church was distinctly a society of individuals. Each definitely stood for something. None of them would take anything from the minister or anyone else until it had passed through the chemistry of his own mental processes. Who could lead a group in which no one was disposed to be a follower!

I was entertained in the home of Judge Andreas Ueland on the shore of Lake Calhoun. This of itself was a rare experience and an unusual privilege. The large family was at its most interesting period — the oldest daughter was then

in college, but home on vacation, and the youngest son was kindergarten age. I have watched from a distance the careers of the various members of this family with much interest.

The outcome was that after some delay, while other candidates were heard, I received an invitation to become minister of the society, and the necessity of making a decision was at hand. Some ministers flit from church to church as casually as if it were a matter of little moment, but changes in my life have always been affairs of deep concern. The facts that bound me to the Helena society — the kindness and consideration of the people — paradoxical as it may seem, also filled me with a strong desire to change my environment completely and begin anew. I was now alone. I had no family or dependents, and did not then expect ever to have any. I had no expensive habits or ambitions. A modest salary would be ample provided my work were reasonably satisfactory. I seemed to be peculiarly well situated to face the uncertainties of the position. If I made a straightforward, earnest effort and did not succeed the result would not be over serious either to myself or the society. The upshot of it all was that I yielded to the Minneapolis challenge and have never regretted it.

I first placed the matter before the Helena board, and with the same sympathetic consideration they had always shown, they declared that they would put no stone in the way of my doing precisely what I felt that I ought to do. My sense of guilt at leaving them was assuaged by the fact that they soon secured a minister who served them acceptably for many years.

I utilized a brief interval between pastorates by visiting relatives and friends in Southern California. I preached in the Universalist church in Pasadena, of which my father was a member, spoke to one or two other organizations and made acquaintanceships that were helpful in later life. I have always found that I meet more of the acquaintances of my youth and childhood in Southern California than in any other place, so large has been the influx of midwesterners.

On this trip I visited the Grand Canyon of Arizona in mid-winter. When I arrived in the morning it was snowing and continued to snow all day, so nothing could be seen. The second day was clear and crisp. As I walked out and looked at the canyon I mentally exclaimed, "What a ditch! it must be nearly half a mile across!" The strata and the formations on the opposite side were so distinct that they seemed very near. When I was told that the "ditch" was thirteen miles wide I was dumbfounded. This illusion as to distance is explained by the extreme clearness of the winter atmosphere, and the fact that on each ledge was a deposit of new-fallen snow penciling out each stratum with marvelous distinctness.

When the guests at the hotel were asked if they wished to make the trip down Bright Angel Trail, I was the only one who raised his hand, so I had a guide all to myself. It was near zero weather; I tied up my ears and put on my warmest clothing. Our mules had to wade through a foot and a half of snow at the top of the trail, but the farther we went the thinner the blanket of snow and the warmer it was. The canyon has been described so many times that I will not attempt it, but the extreme clearness of the atmosphere and the distinctness with which every ledge and formation was traced out by the new-fallen snow convinced me

that I had chosen a fortunate time to see one of nature's most striking phenomena.

I began my Minneapolis ministry the first Sunday in January, 1906, arriving a few days beforehand. During it, I was more completely on my own than at any other period of my life. In my other churches I had been preceded by ministers similar to myself. I carried forward their work, supplementing it by such new features as changed conditions seemed to demand.

The Minneapolis society had had only one minister during the first quarter of a century of its existence. He was so unique and his work was so elusive in character that he left no footsteps behind him. There was no precedent to follow. The charm of his personality, the artistry of his expression, the incisiveness and inclusiveness of his intellectual comprehension could not be passed on or imitated.

In my opening sermon I stated that the Simmons régime in the society was a closed circle, complete in itself. It stood on a plateau that was unapproachable. We could admire it and draw inspiration from it, but we could not continue it. If we attempted that we were doomed to failure. If members of the congregation were disposed to compare my work with his I must quit at once. My work must be judged by its own merits and not by the standards of my predecessor. I asserted that there must be an abundance of worth-while work that a group like ours could do in a community like Minneapolis if we were content to confine ourselves to our own capabilities — content to do that which was easily within our reach, and not strive for that which was clearly beyond

our grasp. Possibly a less erudite message from an ordinary personality might reach more people and reach them as effectively as one that depended as much upon the unique character of the listeners as upon the speaker.

The people wholeheartedly accepted my interpretation of the situation, but there were none to take the initiative. Here was a paradoxical situation — a group of people, each of whom was a leader in some line of thought or action, but there was no leadership in the society. They had no notion of following in the footsteps of any other religious organization; nor did they know how to break ground for themselves. All initiative was left to the minister. The trustees, as fine a group of men as could be found, supposedly had charge of the financial and administrative affairs of the society, but apparently seldom ever met unless some crisis arose. The treasurer did his work faithfully and efficiently, but being a hard-working business man, unpaid even for clerk hire, and not having even a finance committee to help him, could of course only receive and expend what came in in response to the general solicitations.

I found that the trustees expected me to call them together when and if I thought there was any occasion for a meeting. I tired of this and during my second year decided to play a waiting game and see what would happen. I waited eleven months and finding that no meeting had been held, gave up the game and called them together.

I first devoted my energy to getting a church school under way for the children — the school had lapsed some years before. I found willing helpers, and prevailed upon one of our Humboldt-trained members, who had moved to Minneapolis, to act as superintendent, so that we soon had a fairly

satisfactory church school. Parents were glad to have a school in which the teaching was in harmony with their own views. I soon found myself the leader of two adult groups that met weekday evenings, one for the study of prophetic literature and one for the study of the Bible. This type of work was a great satisfaction to me as it was in the direction of making my work a "school of life" rather than a conventional church.

The way in which I felt compelled to take the initiative is illustrated by the renovation of the church building. Being conveniently located, the building was in almost continual use — the rentals being almost sufficient to meet the heavy payments on the debt. It seemed to me that almost every unpopular cause in the state held its meetings in our church, which still further intensified the prejudices of the conventionally minded against us — "birds of a feather flock together", being the frequent comment. As the members of the church were almost without exception identified with various militant reform movements, it did not affect the society as adversely as it would one of the traditional type. As a matter of fact Minneapolis Unitarians of that time would have felt uncomfortable if they had not been under fire on several fronts. The newspapers of Minneapolis were less friendly to liberal religion of our brand than in any community in which I have ever worked; consequently we received little favorable publicity. I think that attitude of the press prevails to this day.

The constant use and the occasional abuse of the building had reduced it to a sad state of disrepair. It was disgracefully dirty and shabby. The fact that it was a beautifully finished building made its defacement and neglect all the

more painful. I felt that we could hardly expect many new members for our society unless we had sufficient self-respect to keep our church home presentable. No one in the society would permit his home to present such a neglected appearance.

I called it to the attention of the trustees and of the auxiliary organizations several times. All agreed that something must be done, but I did not succeed in bringing anything to a head until I took the bull by the horns in a rather abrupt fashion. I announced one Sunday morning that the church was going to be renovated and put in good condition during the summer vacation. I stated that if any who did not think it should be undertaken would let me know at once, he would not be solicited; otherwise each one would be expected to contribute his share.

The die having been cast, the trustees and the officers of the Women's Alliance carried the project through with an efficiency and dispatch that was quite amazing. Having to a certain extent underwritten the project I applied myself to the financial side of it. The bills were all paid, we had a little surplus and were all quite happy over it when we came together after the vacation.

Only two auxiliary organizations, the Women's Alliance and the Men's Club, continued to function during the hiatus caused by the illness and death of Mr. Simmons. When I arrived the Alliance was weak in numbers but valiant in courage and in action.

The Minneapolis society has been from its inception until now, primarily a men's organization — much of the time a majority of the congregation being men. The one organization that flourished during the years of adversity was the

Men's Club. Women were invited to attend but were not eligible for membership. It was a forum for the discussion of all questions of human interest, and was recognized as one of the outstanding humanitarian and civic-minded institutions of the city. Men of standing and ability were glad to bring their best to it, each speaker knowing full well that what he had to say would be subjected to the most vigorous and rigorous analysis before the evening was over.

Among the free churches of America, the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis has been during its entire existence, outstanding in its non-ecclesiastical and distinctly secular character. Conditions peculiar to Minneapolis contributed to this end. Among the early settlers who developed the milling business were a number of Universalists from New England — especially from the state of Maine — who prospered phenomenally. Minneapolis early became the stronghold of Universalism in the West. Near the turn of the century there were four Universalist churches in the city. One of these was the wealthiest and most influential church in the community. It was a churchly church. Although liberal, it was ecclesiastical in form at least. Its name, "Church of the Redeemer," indicated that it wished to be considered strictly Christian in a theological sense.

So far as I know the relationship between Universalists and Unitarians in Minneapolis has always been cordial, friendly and cooperative, each recognizing its appeal to people of somewhat different temperament. During my ministry I certainly had no better friend than the gifted Dr. Marion D. Shutter, minister of the Church of the Redeemer.

Those who wanted a liberal church — with the emphasis

on church — could readily find a home in one of the Universalist societies. There were however, a goodly number who were not theological nor ecclesiastical but were nevertheless religious, and who desired religious nurture. These drew together into a distinctly secular organization called the Liberal League. This was the forerunner of the Unitarian Society that has not lost its secular character in the more than sixty years of its existence. So pronouncedly non-ecclesiastical in character was the society when I first appeared on the scene, that some of the members would not enter the auditorium until after the short preliminary service was over. When I introduced a simple responsive service it was vigorously opposed by a few, although it was wholly ethical in character, two-thirds of it being selections from the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose bust occupied a niche in one corner of the auditorium.

The only time in my ministry that I seemed to lean toward conservatism was during my stay in Minneapolis, when I felt compelled to counter some types of radicalism.

That the word "secular", in many uses, is a term of bad odor in the esteem of most people is due entirely to the constant adverse propaganda of ecclesiastics. Churchmen have always tried to draw a sharp line between the sacred and the secular, exalting the one and debasing the other. The secular is denounced in some church circles as unreligious, profane, gross, worldly, degrading, disintegrating, pagan and altogether uninspiring—something without soul and without much sense. Secular education is denounced in unsparing terms as atheistic and unchristian. It has been classified with socialism in the past and is associated with communism,

bolshevism, humanism and even with Nazism or Fascism in recent times. A secular society has thus been regarded as anti-religious, and has sometimes accepted the term. The Unitarian Society of Minneapolis has weathered all of these attacks and retains its secular character as pronouncedly as ever.

Another thing that has helped make the Unitarian Society of Minneapolis decidedly non-ecclesiastical has been the character of the European element in the population of the northwest. It has been predominantly Lutheran in its religious antecedents and affiliations. Here again we encounter one of those strange paradoxes that are always confronting us in the field of religion. Although the Scandinavian and German elements of the population are progressive and enlightened, the Lutheran church of America is the most theologically reactionary of any of the great Protestant bodies. Many of the younger people react from this unbending theological attitude and some of them react so thoroughly that they repudiate all theology or ecclesiasticism and find the Unitarian society most to their liking.

Under the able leadership of Dr. John H. Dietrich, who was minister for nearly a quarter of a century, the size of the congregation gradually increased until it became one of the largest in the city, outgrowing the church auditorium and holding its Sunday morning services, for several years, in one of the large theaters. Dr. Dietrich was the recognized leader of the Humanist movement, which included many Unitarian ministers as well as prominent educators with no church affiliations. The traditions of the Society were capably carried forward by Dr. Dietrich's successor Raymond Bragg, — its secular character being as staunchly maintained as ever.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Impudence Abroad — European Impressions

AS MY second summer in Minneapolis approached I asked Judge Ueland (Chairman of the Board) if he thought they could stretch the vacation period to three months, as I was desirous of indulging in a conventional European trip. I hastened to add that they might reduce my salary proportionately if I were granted this favor. He handed me one of his usual backhanded compliments, saying that a prolonged vacation might be an inducement to increase my salary, but certainly not to reduce it.

I was fortunate enough to join a personally conducted party of only eight members, which was a decided advantage over the usually large groups.

I tried to be open-minded during my European tour — to judge what I saw for what it was worth — but of course I did not succeed in freeing myself of all prejudice. No one ever does. My antipathy for everything ecclesiastical was flaring up constantly, and after being shown the thirty-third piece of the true cross I believed nothing I was told. I hardly believed that St. Peter's Cathedral was real when I saw it, and I refused to go with the others for an audience with the Pope, for I was sure by this time that they would palm off a

bogus one on us. (What could be more unreal than papal assumptions?)

I was not inclined to view European art as something sacrosanct. On the whole I was something of a wet blanket to some members of the party who wished to "oh" and "ah" over everything they were shown or told.

We sailed for one day among the Azores, anchoring for an hour or so and giving the Islanders a chance to come aboard and barter with the passengers. It is difficult to imagine anything more beautiful than these islands which were terraced to the tops of the mountains; the small checkerboard farms separated from each other by vine covered stone walls; the golden fields of ripened grain interspersed with green vineyards and orchards; the roads lined by gleaming white-washed buildings, penciling off the entire landscape in perfect proportion.

We spent a few hours at Gibraltar: were duly impressed by the picturesqueness and the impregnability of the rock, as well as by the cosmopolitan character of the humanity that converges there. As near perfect weather as one could ask for prevailed through our entire tour. The Mediterranean was as blue, the islands we passed as quaint, and the approach to Naples as indescribably impressive as it is always said to be. The guide books describe everything I saw much better than I can do, and so I will confine myself entirely to my own peculiar personal impressions and reflections. Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France and Great Britain were included in our crowded itinerary. Cathedrals, castles, palaces, ruins, art galleries, museums, scenery, opera houses, churches and still more churches —

all were viewed with attempted appreciation. What vast amounts of energy, labor, skill, patience, thought and feeling have gone into the production of all these things — and how much heartbreak and tragedy as well!

I was not able to view all of these treasures with the detachment that many people affect; as if they were gifts from the gods put on display for us to admire and marvel at. Who really produced all these things and for what? How much joy and happiness and hope went into them? and how much sweat and tears and unrequited toil? Poets are always singing of the joy and exaltation of spirit that are expressed in art. Yes, I hope so: but how much slavish degrading toil goes into much of it also!

In Florence I watched the workmen reproducing fine paintings in marble mosaics — putting minute pieces of various colored marble together so skilfully that it was indistinguishable from the original painting. The proprietor proudly exhibited a small table top that had just been completed for a Russian prince. I asked how much the Russian had paid for his treasure and found that it amounted to a little more than nine hundred dollars. Persistently pursuing my inquiries I was told that it had taken one craftsman more than three years to produce the table top! Making allowance for the proprietor's profit, for materials and tools, figure out for yourself what a pittance those men were receiving for their exquisite production.

All of the huge murals in St. Peter's cathedral were being reproduced in marble mosaics by the method I have described. At my second visit twenty-one years later, I found upon inquiry that the work of reproduction had been completed. Compute if you can the number of human automatons who

literally give their entire lives to glorify that great cathedral in imperishable marble? Has the world received anything that adequately compensates for this wholesale dehumanization of character? Does kindness to marble justify cruelty to men?

In southern Europe the number and magnificence of the churches and palaces were matched by the masses of human misery that were on display everywhere. Beggars of every kind and description swarmed on all sides; many of them hideously maimed, exhibiting their deformities in their appeals for charity. And yet, the Christian church, so-called, had dominated that part of the world for more than a millennium!

Magnificent art treasures and millions of dwarfed and mutilated human beings, generation after generation, were the two striking products of those centuries! Can inanimate art treasures atone for the crucifixion of countless millions of human souls and bodies, age after age? To what extent does ecclesiasticism tend to make slaves of its worshippers?

The strongest impression that I received in southern Europe was of a kind of nastiness that adhered to all that I saw. Everything seemed filthy and unclean and my olfactory nerves reinforced my vision much of the time. I admit that this outer-impression was due in part to my own inner state. I was half-sick and dragged around in a semi-nauseated condition, in tune with my surroundings — no one ought to have good digestion in such environment!

One more confession I must make. My second visit to Italy, when Mussolini was at the height of his power, seemed

to reveal a transformation. The surface squalor, poverty and filthiness had disappeared from the highways of life. A sort of polished cleanliness seemed to prevail. Rome was the most brilliantly illuminated city I ever saw. Had all that festering nastiness simply been driven under cover? or had it been eradicated? I did not know.

I am inclined to believe that Mussolini did an excellent piece of much needed work in Italy during the early years of his regime; but when the Caesar complex laid hold of him all went for naught, and the later state of the people was worse than the first. Since the ignominious fall of the Dictator, the pitiable plight of poor old Italy is beyond comprehension.

Where has ecclesiastical Christianity ever had so good an opportunity to demonstrate what it could contribute to the world as it has had in Italy! Its main contributions were magnificent monuments and mutilated human lives. In spite of all of its tragic failures that are in such glaring evidence everywhere, the chances of that same ecclesiastical authoritarianism being restored to power, not only in Italy but over a large portion of the world, seems quite possible.

No part of my European trip did I more thoroughly enjoy at the time than my three weeks in Switzerland. I quickly recovered from the haunting nausea that had plagued me all through Italy; I breathed the pure air of the Alps and drank the pure water that issued from them; I sailed over her enchantingly beautiful lakes, so fascinatingly adorned by the villages and cities that cling to their margins; I climbed mountains and gained a speaking acquaintance with some of

the glaciers; I talked with some of the people (with difficulty) and experienced a renewal of life and faith.

When a United States of Europe is finally established, as it will be, and hatred and fear are replaced by mutual confidence and a reasonable sense of security, the past history that Europeans will turn to for inspiration will not be the histories of the great states — France, Germany, Italy and Russia — with their plots and counterplots, aggressions and sordid ambitions; rather will they dwell upon the story of Switzerland which pointed the way out of blind hatred and conflict to cooperative peace and security.

For centuries the Swiss people, living in the very center of war-torn Europe, composed of peoples differing from each other in race, religion, and language — the very obstacles that are supposed to make unity and harmony impossible — slowly but surely tied themselves together in an effective federation of states and developed the most thoroughly democratic institutions to be found in the world, enjoying all of the essential freedoms.

The Swiss republic is a product of hardheaded realism. Every law on their statute books, every clause in their constitutions, every tribunal established, grew out of a real situation that was met and adjusted in common sense ways. It was not so much conformity to an alluring ideal, as accommodation to an imperative necessity, that guided and directed them. It was because they were able to compose their difficulties without combat or serious suppression that they little by little built up a real commonwealth with personal liberty established and safeguarded.

Just as we dwell upon the stories of the peoples of little

Palestine and little Greece with emotional satisfaction, when we turn to ancient history, rather than dwelling on the pomp and power of Babylon and Rome; so will future generations turn for guidance to the achievement of the Swiss and Danes, because they taught people how to turn turmoil and tragedy into "quietness and confidence."

Little evidence of pinching poverty appeared to the casual visitor in Germany in 1907. The Germans seemed to have solved the poverty problem in its worst features. Evidence of improvement confronted one everywhere. Industries were being built with an efficiency and economy that was admirable. No shoddy work could be seen anywhere. Graft, in the Anglo-Saxon sense, seemed to have been almost completely eliminated from political and economic life. Industrial Germany was coming to its own with marked thoroughness.

The empire was enjoying a prosperity and a sense of strength and unity that it had never experienced before, and was decidedly feeling its oats. A self-conscious sense of superiority pervaded the atmosphere. The Germans regarded the empire as the one secure and unshakeable reality on the planet, and never tired of comparing its strength with the weakness and instability of the French Republic.

Military arrogance characterized the whole of German officialdom. The German army was regarded as the greatest thing the human race had brought forth and the uniform had the right of way everywhere. Woman was made to feel that she was only a woman and must be forever profoundly thankful for the many courtesies and considerations that were generously doled out to her by lordly man. In no other country was I made to feel that I was a foreigner to the

same extent as in the Fatherland. The official attitude curtly was, "Take it or leave it, you have no business here anyway."

In a public address that I gave soon after my return, I stated in substance, that, in my opinion, the future of Europe and to a great extent the future of the world, depended upon the German people more than upon any others. If the better Germany, largely hidden, which I felt was the real Germany; the peaceful, efficient, patient, plodding, earnest, sincere, Germany; the Germany of live-and-let-live; the Germany of accommodation and adjustment — if this Germany prevailed, then it might well lead the world in science, art, commerce and education, and its leadership might be highly beneficial to the world. If, however, the superficial, sabre-rattling Germany lived up to the ominous mask of arrogant superiority and military imperiousness that it had assumed and was wearing so menacingly — if it continued to refuse stubbornly accommodation and compromise with other forces — then it would be impossible to predict what the dire consequences might be.

The Peace Conference, first called together by the Czar of Russia in 1898, was holding its second session in secret while I was in The Hague. I had great hopes that this might evolve into an effective international tribunal and watched the reports of its activities with much interest. My hopes faded as the reports showed how insistently and consistently Germany blocked every effort to make anything out of that court, and seemed determined to sabotage every effort to substitute anything for military influence in the settlement of international disputes. It became more and more evi-

dent that Germany was drunk with the military wine she was imbibing so freely.

We now all know that it was the masked, military Germany that I viewed with so much apprehension in 1907, that prevailed; and with what disastrous results to the whole world!

There was still a chance that the better Germany, the truer Germany, might come to her own after her defeat, if the democracies of the world had come to the help of the struggling German republic in her hours of greatest need, instead of beating her down as a thing accursed and driving the iron of misanthropic distrust deeper into her soul. For this result no nation is more largely responsible than our own blind, blundering Republic which repudiated all her principles and traditions by first participating in a world war and then refusing to participate in a world peace.

I tried to like France and the French Republic. I gave my democratic prejudices full swing, looking for favorable features everywhere. France, a Catholic country, had been able to maintain the republic for more than a full generation in spite of the tremendous opposition encountered both from without and within; it had marvelously recovered from the complete debacle of the war of 1870: these things had greatly aroused my admiration. In the face of many serious obstacles continuous progress had been made in the direction of more democracy and fuller freedom.

At the time of my first European tour, France had just taken the unbelievably bold step of disestablishing the church and was getting away with it quite successfully. This warmed the cockles of my anti-ecclesiastical heart. A people who

could do that in the face of such difficulties must be capable of accomplishing almost anything. Several threatening reactionary movements had been successfully weathered, the republic emerging from each more firmly established than before.

I was only partially successful in liking the French people as much as I wanted to. They were less sympathetic and generous than the English or even the Germans when once one broke through the German mask to establish personal relations with them. They were provincial and had little interest in anything outside France. Tourists were treated as so much commodity to be exploited for all the traffic would bear. Californians can hardly blame them for that.

I enjoyed my few weeks in Great Britain rather better than any other part of my trip, with the possible exception of Switzerland. It seemed like home to be able to converse with people freely, and yet there was a keen sense of being in a foreign land that gave edge to everything. English are English and Americans are American in some subtle, indescribable way. I secured my release from the conducted party and traveled on my own. I did not see as many of the outstanding historical landmarks as I would if I had been shown them, but the things that I spied out for myself and inquired into, were things that made a lasting impression and took on a meaning that other experiences did not.

The much maligned English weather has never exhibited itself to me. During my three short sojourns in Great Britain I experienced only fine weather, scarcely surpassed even by California.

The English cathedrals and castles were cleaner and usu-

ally more attractive in their settings than those on the continent. They were not infested by deformed and diseased beggars as were those in southern Europe. They were Protestant, and as such seemed in a different world from their Catholic counterparts across the English Channel.

While I was charmed by the good manners of the British people of all classes, and by the well kept and beautiful country landscapes, I was depressed by economic conditions — by the painfulness of the widespread poverty and the smug self-satisfaction of the more fortunate ones.

The terrible poverty of the great majority in London, Liverpool and Glasgow was not as complete and widespread as that in Naples or Rome, but was more painful and threatening. The poor of Italy were picturesque and gay in spite of hunger, rags and deformity. They sang and danced as if the little thread of life were worth-while, however slender. The poor of southern Europe had, apparently either passed the suffering stage or had not fully attained it.

But there was no gayety or picturesqueness in the sordid misery of the adult poor in Great Britain. The lines of suffering in their faces were deep and ineradicable, scarring their souls to the center. They were fully conscious of their unnecessary condition and resented the injustice of it with bitterness and foreboding. There was little mirth in their noisy night ribaldry; rather the agonizing cry of mutilated minds.

The thing that disturbed me most was the complacency of many of the privileged ones, who fared forth to their week-end shooting orgies as undisturbed as if "God was in his heaven and all was well with the world". They apparently accepted the scripture dictum, "the poor ye have always

with you," as something fixed in the divine order. Oh yes, they gave alms, often very generously, but that was little more than a ritualistic reminder of their good fortune, or an insurance premium for its perpetuation, and was not meant to effect any essential change in the beneficent order of things.

I could not avoid the conviction that a people, so rich and so poor as the British were, was headed for a shattering revolution of some kind. Perhaps one of the disturbing features was the feeling that industrial America was following in the footsteps of Great Britain, and what she was, we were likely to become. I could not conceive of America as heading for any such conditions as existed in Italy, but Great Britain was a clear-cut warning to Americans to change their course.

I hasten to add that each subsequent visit to Great Britain has revealed improvement in the condition of the poor. Although the general state of the nation was regarded as less satisfactory than formerly, the complacency of the privileged classes was disappearing.

Each time that I have visited Europe I seemed to feel a greater degree of tranquillity and wholesome-mindedness among the inhabitants of Switzerland, Holland and the Scandinavian countries than existed in the greater nations. They were freer from the terrific strains that the jealousies, rivalries and military burdens imposed upon the others. Because no one feared them or was jealous of them, the small nations were able to make advantageous trade agreements with their neighbors.

Certainly no people have fewer of the world's natural resources than do the Danes, and yet no people appeared to

be living so well-balanced a life, free from pinching poverty and economic anxiety, as did the inhabitants of Jutland when I spent a few weeks among them in 1934. They were able to exchange their meager products advantageously enough to bring from the ends of the earth whatever was necessary for a wholesome life.

I expect to see the peoples of the smaller nations rise from the ashes of the present disaster more quickly and completely than their greater neighbors who caused their downfall, and enjoy a conscience infinitely freer from the corroding canker that must consume the souls of those who have been poisoned by the tragically wasteful enmities of this age.

My first trip abroad (1907) found the cause of liberalism rising to flood tide both in Europe and in the rest of the world. Never did the person with faith in liberalism and democracy have greater reason to look forward with hope and expectation than during that decade. Italy's defiance of the Vatican was generally accepted as a first step toward disestablishment of the Church. The liberal men with whom I talked in Italy expected their government to follow in the footsteps of France in this respect, and also to establish a thorough system of secular education soon.

As I said before, France seemed to be on the march along distinctly liberal lines. It was comparatively free from such poverty as greeted one sometimes in Great Britain with such oppressive emphasis. One could reasonably expect the French to meet and overcome their economic, political and religious problems successfully, serious as they were. The dreams of the eighteenth century French revolutionists were coming

true one by one, after more than a century of delay and disappointment.

Things were moving in the same direction in Great Britain in spite of the depressing poverty that prevailed. The liberal party was firmly established under the leadership of Campbell-Bannerman. Young Lloyd-George was the gadfly stinging the British conscience into humanitarian activity, and smug old British conservatism was awakening to a realization of its dangerous defects and the need of radical reforms, if violence were to be avoided.

The leaven of liberalism was beginning to work even in Russia, Turkey and China.

In our own country, the years from the turn of the century to the outbreak of the world war were crowded with experimental extensions of democratic processes and safeguards, in municipal, state and federal government. Many of these experiments were cumbersome, ill thought out and ineffective, but after the winnowing process much good seed of real achievement remained.

Democracy and liberalism became so much the fashion throughout the world, that peoples, nations and institutions donned the garb of liberalism and republicanism and talked the language of democracy before it had entered very deeply into real thought and comprehension. The ultimate triumph of democracy and liberalism throughout the world appeared assured, and was taken for granted by many who had little realization of what it implied. World faith appeared to be rapidly replacing other-world faith.

In those days of faith, if anyone had told us that in a few years democracy and liberalism would be fighting desperately for life with their backs to the wall, he would have been

dismissed as an alarmist too wild to receive consideration. If we had been told that in a short time many of the elemental practices of personal liberty would be made impossible in much of what were then regarded as the most enlightened portions of the world, we would have been incredulous. And yet, such was the state of affairs in 1946.

We may console ourselves with the belief that the very violence of the reaction against liberalism is recognition of liberalism's possible strength and resourcefulness. Reactionaries realize that liberalism is a plant so vital and well-rooted that every vestige of it must be eradicated from the world or it will spread to domination. With all parts of the world life in vital touch with each other, life cannot go on half bound and half free. The precipitate violence of the reaction convinces me that it will spend itself, and sanity and reason, the essence of all true liberalism, will prevail. It is only the superficial liberalism that is being temporarily swept away by a still more superficial and ephemeral reaction.

Democracy as it has existed in the past was necessarily superficial in character and limited in scope. It was political only and neither penetrated into economic life nor crossed international boundary lines. It must now do both. Important as political democracy is, it could not go very far in the past. Only a small fraction of our total life was political, while nine-tenths of our activities in the past were provincial and community activities that concerned our own government but little, and other governments not at all. A sort of chance adjustment of our relations within the community sufficed; habit and tradition were better regulators under such conditions than government could possibly be.

All of that has changed almost without warning. Provincial life has disappeared. Only one community exists today—a world community. What each little group or section does, has suddenly become not only the concern of our own government but the concern of all governments. Their interdependence is inescapable.

We are faced with the necessity of making democracy penetrate into our entire economic life, and of making it international as well. Present confusion and violence is the measure of our sense of helplessness in the face of such a herculean undertaking. Our old democratic machinery is as inadequate for the new task as cobwebs are to carry traffic across the Golden Gate. In the meantime the old catch-as-catch-can game goes on. Nazism, Fascism, and other totalitarianisms are simply that old game on a world scale, unregulated by habit or tradition.

I returned to my native land in 1907 with my previous convictions—prejudices confirmed. My belief that ecclesiasticism helps beget militarism and is the chief obstacle to progress was deepened. It is the big stumbling block to the economic changes that the future demands. Nothing so bedevils clear thinking and effective action as the primitive theologies that virtually all institutional religions uphold.

America seems better to me after each trip abroad, and yet I am depressed by the fact that many Europeans make more of their meager opportunities than we do of our almost unbounded ones.

CHAPTER NINE

An Unexpected Transplanting

AFTER two years' experience I decided that I fitted into the Minneapolis situation sufficiently well to look forward to spending the major part of my active life there, and hoped that my part in the life of that vigorous community might not be an unworthy one.

May 17, 1908, I was married to Ida Belle Woodworth. She was three months my junior and was a successful teacher in the Minneapolis city schools. She was born on a farm near Menomenie, Wisconsin, and up to that time our economic experiences had been much the same.

Although I shall continue to use the first personal pronoun here, it ought to disappear at this date. While each maintained his individual convictions unimpaired, our lives and our work have been so completely fused and interwoven that it is impossible to differentiate them in any way. She has given herself to the work and to the interests of the churches we served as completely and effectively as I have done, and whatever success has been achieved is a strictly joint affair. Her exceptional social gifts and her ability to work happily with children and young people have supplemented my work at its weakest point.

While I was in Helena and Minneapolis I received a surprising number of invitations to speak to educational and secular groups that had no connection with our fellowship, as well as invitations to participate in our own denominational activities. I have probably always been more reluctant to "branch out" than I should have been, feeling that concentration is more desirable than diffusion, and have declined as many invitations to speak as I have accepted. My lethargic disposition however, has probably had much to do with my limited activities.

During the spring of 1908 I was asked to speak at the Western Conference of Unitarian churches that met in Chicago in May, and was also invited to give the annual sermon at the May meetings that were held in Boston a week later. It was considered a rather unusual recognition for one as inexperienced as I was, to be chosen to give the annual sermon. After talking it over I accepted both invitations and our marriage was put forward a few weeks in order that my wife might accompany me and receive a real initiation into denominational work, and a valuable experience it proved to be.

My address in Chicago was well received and made a favorable impression, but the annual sermon in Tremont Temple, Boston, was a disappointment. It was a hot night and the attendance was poor. Eastern people apparently felt that in a crowded week of meetings an unknown stripling from the Middle West was hardly worth making an effort to hear. Another detraction was due to the fact that I had undergone a surgical operation in my nostrils a short time before, for the purpose of improving my voice. Unfortunately I had not fully recovered and the temporary effect was the opposite from what I had hoped.

I have heard several "annual sermons", and few of them were worth listening to, although some were by preachers of distinction. I am inclined to believe this is because the "annual sermon" is conferred upon ministers as a mark of distinction, and the conferee instead of selecting some incident in life and developing it into an effective sermon as he does in his own pulpit, tries to deliver a scholarly sermon covering the whole field of religion as befits the occasion, and so gets nowhere.

Our trip east and my giving the annual sermon was not without its effect on our lives. The sermon was published in the denominational paper and read better than it sounded. It centered on me the attention of several churches that were looking for a minister, among them, the church in Los Angeles.

We carried out our previous plan of spending our first vacation together in visiting some of our relatives and acquaintances and having a summer in California. Our first stop was at Vermillion, South Dakota, where my older sister and her family were living near the old homestead where I was born. My brother-in-law was a farmer who combined a poetical and practical interest in farming to a rather rare degree. A fine field of growing grain or an orchard laden with fruit brought him pleasure quite apart from its economic value of which he was fully conscious. Dakota was at its best that season and there are few agricultural sections that can outstrip southeastern Dakota when the seasons are good. The stripling trees which our fathers had planted with such care had become stately forests and fruit laden orchards,

transforming the formerly monotonous prairies into scenes of beauty and utility.

We stopped in delectable Denver for a few days and attended some of the sessions of the Democratic National Convention that was meeting there. The outcome of the convention was a foregone conclusion and the main task was to put in the time for four days so the citizens could get some of the money back that they had contributed to bring the convention to the Rocky Mountain city. The outstanding feature of the convention was the fact that they succeeded in cheering longer and louder than the Republicans had at their convention a week or so earlier. Taft had been nominated at the Republican convention, but the cheering was all for Roosevelt. They had managed to keep the cheering going for a full hour at one time. By organizing the delegates into relays to rest each other, the Democrats managed to keep the cheering going without a lull for an hour and five minutes — irrefutable proof that Bryan was a greater statesman than Roosevelt! "Ain't democracy wonderful."

Salt Lake City entertained us for a few days. Mrs. Hodgins had had a happy experience there some years before, serving as teacher for three years in the public schools when they were first organized under the progressive leadership of Dr. Milspagh, later principal of Teacher's College in Los Angeles. The number of former pupils and friends who wished to see Mrs. Hodgins was an unmistakable tribute to her both as teacher and as friend. Bathing in the lake, where our feet seemed to be much lighter than our heads, and meeting so many delightfully hospitable people made the visit an unexpected pleasure to me.

If the devil had arranged things he could hardly have contrived to give a newcomer to California a worse impression than my wife received on that occasion. We had decided to visit beautiful Yosemite on our way to Pasadena where my father lived. Usually the descent from the arid Sierras into the beautiful irrigated Sacramento valley is like an entrance into Paradise. On this occasion it was more like a descent into the Inferno.

I had been in California twice before, but this was Mrs. Hodgins's initiation. I had been careful not to expatiate too rapturously on the paradisaical conditions we were sure to find, but I did say that however hot the days might be, the nights were sure to be cool. Instead of being cool on our first night, in Merced, California, it was so hot that the guests at the hotel had deserted their rooms and were lying around on the piazzas and in the yard in their night things gasping for breath. We got through the night somehow and the sun came up so bright and fiery hot that I expected to see the wooden buildings flash into flames.

Arrangements for ingress and egress to the Yosemite valley could hardly have been made worse than they then were. It took two days to get in from Merced and two days to get out. We had to travel part way on a dinky, dirty little steam road and part way by stage coach. If we tried to see anything we found ourselves facing the brightest, hottest sun that ever shone. Our eyes seemed to be almost burned out of our heads and we saw very little then. During the few days that we were in the valley the sun continued to pour down in unabated fury.

It took three days to get to Pasadena from Yosemite. Trains were always late. The hours we sat in the withering

weather in the abominable station at Merced, waiting for a delayed train from which no word came, seemed interminable. We were sidetracked again and again at the most unattractive places. The miserable little palms and orange trees that tried to grow by the wayside were so laden with dust that they were scarcely distinguishable from the desert landscape.

Our disappointments were not at an end when we finally reached beautiful Pasadena. My father and stepmother tried to welcome us joyously, but we soon saw that something was radically wrong. Mother looked wretched and we discovered that she was suffering from an incurable internal cancer. She died thirteen months later. Father at seventy-five was depressed and uncommunicative, trying to make the best of it in stoical fashion. Before the day was out, I told my wife that I did not see how we could leave them in that condition. If I could get a chance to supply a church nearby, it would seem as though we must stay and see them through the crisis anyway. Certainly not an appealing proposition to a bride of a few weeks!

Fate — Providence, luck, coincidence; "the power that helps the helpless" or whatever you will — was waiting for us also. Two days later an automobile stopped before my father's bungalow; the occupants came in, introduced themselves and told me they had heard that we were coming. They announced that Dr. Howard, the Minister in the Los Angeles Unitarian church, had resigned, and they had decided to ask me if I would consider a call from the church.

Of course I parried, assuring them that I was not looking for another settlement; that we had decided to work out our salvation in Minneapolis; that although Los Angeles was

doubtless attractive in many ways, my only reason for considering it would be for the sake of being near my people. After a friendly visit they drove away saying that I would hear from some of the church officials.

I was not inclined to take this approach too seriously. I assumed that they wished me to enter the lists as a candidate along with many others, and I had no stomach for candidating at that time, having in fact declined one or two invitations to candidate just previously. Within a day or two we received an invitation from Dr. and Mrs. Howard who were still living in Los Angeles to take dinner with them. After the meal probably two dozen church people casually strolled in, apparently by accident. We talked about almost everything except the church, and when all had gone we returned to Pasadena.

Two days later a committee from the church waited on me at my father's home and tendered me a formal invitation to become minister of the society.

I was quite bowled over as I was not prepared for anything so precipitate. I reiterated that I was not looking for another church. They replied that they knew that very well: if I had been looking for a church they would not be looking for me. They said that they had decided not to hear candidates, but to look the field over and call someone on his record and standing. They assured me that they had looked me up quite carefully, had received recommendations from those in whom they had confidence, and had concluded that a man who would fit into the Minneapolis church would be about right for them.

I assured them that we would give the matter careful consideration: we could not decide a question of such import-

ance on the spur of the moment: not until we had returned to Minneapolis, consulted with the trustees there, and considered the situation from all points of view could we give them a final answer. They seemed to be quite well satisfied with this arrangement.

My father declared with much emphasis that we must not take them into consideration; that they simply did not count, and we must consider only what in the long run would be best for ourselves. He said they would get along somehow, and my stepmother seconded his declaration. The effort that this complete renunciation cost them was more appealing than if they had begged us to remain. We knew that there was nothing they wanted so much as to have us near them during their remaining days. The older I get the more I appreciate how strong their feelings must have been.

We spent a few days in San Francisco on our way home. How different from the San Francisco I had known a few years before when I was a resident there for six months. It was bravely rising from the ashes of the disastrous fire and earthquake that had laid it low two years before. The more congested down town portion had been completely rebuilt in a very substantial fashion. Then there was a wide zone between this nucleus and the outer rim, which was not devastated by the fire, that had not been rebuilt at all. I renewed acquaintances with some of our former friends and we pushed on.

We stopped a few days in the thriving city of Wichita, Kansas, to visit my wife's youngest sister and her husband and their daughter, who was then less than a year old. Mr. Luttgen, the brother-in-law, was in the employ of the Inter-

national Harvester Company. I had seen him for the first time a year before in London, England, where he was then stationed with the same company.

After returning to Minneapolis and discussing the situation with the church people there, I sent my acceptance of the call to Los Angeles. I do not claim that self-interest had nothing to do with it. The Los Angeles church was in better condition than the Minneapolis church at that time. It paid a better salary, which was very acceptable. Yet I am quite sure that if family considerations had not entered into it, we would have stayed in Minneapolis and taken our chances as we had decided to do. Minneapolis was at that time as normal, healthy and vigorous an American city, with as promising a future, as could be found.

The pull on my wife's emotions produced by the change was especially strong. She had spent the most impressionable years of her life in Minneapolis, having been educated in the city schools and the University, and having taught in and about Minneapolis for nearly twenty years.

Mrs. Hodgins was an enthusiastic teacher who loved her work passionately, and gave herself to it without reserve. The schoolroom was the nucleus of her field of labor and not its periphery. Not until she knew the home conditions of every child in her care did she feel competent to teach, and she spent much time visiting the homes and interesting the pupils and their parents in all of the vital affairs of the city. Her acquaintanceship was therefore broad and deep. To this day, when she returns to the city, it is astonishing to see how many men and women, now parents or even grandparents, gather about her and remind her of the many incidents that

were of vital importance to them in their school days. This friendship has been especially tenacious with a group of girls that she led in the church school for several years.

The ties of affection, sympathy and mutual interdependence that bound the Woodworth family, consisting of an invalid mother and four daughters, were very intense. To take Mrs. Hodgkin suddenly out of this extremely congenial environment of so long duration, and inject her into the tragic troubles of unknown "in-laws" before she had half a chance to become acquainted with her husband was certainly a wrench. As usual she accepted it as if it was the thing she really wanted, although we all knew it was not so.

This change which at the time seemed so uncongenial proved to be highly advantageous. Her life in Minneapolis had become so intertwined by duties and responsibilities of all kinds that she was overworked all the time. This, in addition to a serious surgical operation which she had undergone about a year before our marriage, reduced her vitality seriously. We boarded at a family hotel in Los Angeles for the first year and this gave her the opportunity she needed for rest, recuperation and readjustment before church and social responsibilities accumulated. The weather was at its best; we spent much time out of doors exploring our environment, and thus repaired her bad first impression of California.

CHAPTER TEN

"If You Can Keep Your Head when All about You Are Losing Theirs"

MINNEAPOLIS and Los Angeles were the same size in 1908. Everyone would agree that Minneapolis was more substantial, and more typically American. It was the center of a vast midwestern rural population; hardy, vigorous and well-rooted. The Mississippi valley region has never been so uniformly prosperous as it was then. Everyone knew as definitely as anything can be known what its future would be.

Los Angeles was entirely different. Its future was anybody's guess. It was generally regarded as an upstart, mushroom, boom place, perched on the edge of the desert with little to give it substance. Each community in Southern California seemed at that time like a flower in an ash heap. It might be beautiful for the moment but was likely to dry up and blow away anytime. San Francisco was regarded by all as one of the world's coming great cities; but Los Angeles was a parvenu that would soon subside to unimportance.

We thus seemed to be taking a gambler's chance; deserting one of the most substantial and predictable communities and risking a leap into the unknown. The things that were

to bring Southern California a large population and make it a center of many important activities were then unforeseen.

I slipped into the Los Angeles work in a most unobserved fashion. Our coming scarcely produced a ripple on the surface of church affairs. Dr. Howard, my predecessor, gave his concluding sermon the last Sunday in October and I began the first Sunday in November. The congregation had not heard or seen me before. I was not introduced by anyone. I just appeared in the pulpit, read the service, preached the sermon, pronounced the benediction, stood at one of the doors at the close of the service and shook hands with the people as if I had always been there. They were cordial and appeared to accept me as a matter of course. The year's work had been planned before our arrival and was carried through as planned with little variation. There was no installation service. An entirely informal social reception was held and we met the people individually; no speeches were made; no commitments or promises were indulged in. So far as I could discover there was little appreciable change in the congregation — little falling off or little increase throughout the year.

During my entire twelve years' service there, no church could have been freer from the exhibitionism, the fanfare and the inflated values that are supposed to characterize California.

The coming together of the two coasts of America into a common national life is a vivid illustration of the change in world status that has taken place in the past century and a half. While our Revolutionary fathers were establishing the

United States on the Atlantic seaboard, a socialistic theocracy, based on benevolent peonage, was being planted in California by the Roman Catholic padres from Mexico. Corresponding to the thirteen states in the east, founded upon the principles of "liberty or death," were the twenty-two mission centers in California, in which the natives were persuaded to give up physical freedom and accept a state of servitude in this life, for the sake of soul salvation after death.

The strikingly significant thing about these two contemporaneous movements is not so much the contrast in character and motive, as the fact that they were as completely ignorant of each other's existence as if they had been on different planets. They had no influence upon each other, because they had no common contact. Today the people of the two coasts are in closer touch with each other in many ways than were the people on opposite sides of the same street less than a century and a half ago. They listen to the same news broadcasts from all parts of the world, participate in common discussions on all subjects of human interest, and shuttle back and forth in their airplanes as casually as they formerly hailed each other across the highway.

The easy intercommunication between the two coasts has produced other striking effects. During the early decades of the nineteenth century, Los Angeles was the most distinctly Catholic of all the cities that are now under the stars and stripes. Non-Catholics were at first entirely unknown. When they did begin to appear they were outlaws, having no recognized place in the established régime.

During the same period, Boston was the most distinctly Protestant of all American cities. The inhabitants of Boston

took their Protestantism more seriously and regarded the Papacy and all of its works with more misgivings than did the people of any other metropolis.

In the meantime these two communities have changed places in this regard. Boston is now the most thoroughly Catholic and European in character of all of our great cities, while Los Angeles has a larger percent of Protestants in its population, and is the most distinctly American in character of any of the urban centers.

No higher tribute can be paid to my sanity than the fact that I served a liberal church in Los Angeles for twelve years and then was deemed competent to serve satisfactorily an old, long-established, safe and sane society in New England for nearly twenty years, until I reached the age of retirement. I doubt if there is any place on earth where it is more difficult for one to be announced as a liberal minister, and then to keep one's feet steadily on the ground than in Los Angeles. I may have failed in almost every other respect, but I did that one thing.

More adventurers of every description drift into Southern California than into any other section of the earth — especially religious, psychological, medical and metaphysical adventurers. Many of them are brilliant, able and well-meaning, but the majority have some cockeyed scheme for saving mankind, and incidentally for securing themselves a comfortable income.

From the years 1908 to 1920 many of these adventurers tried to use the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles as a springboard from which to launch their pet Utopias. What right had a minister to call himself "liberal" if he were not

willing to turn his church over to any cause or enthusiast wanting it? Such was the attitude of many men and women who descended upon me while I was minister of the church.

It sometimes seemed as though all the educated men and women in America who had failed in their special professions or vocations crowded into California, confident that they could inaugurate movements that would bring fame and fortune to all who would embrace them, if they could only get someone to stake them for a start. I was abused and sometimes threatened because I did not jump at the chance to launch some self-appointed messiah on a benevolent world-conquering crusade!

Someone has said, "Save me from my friends, I can take care of my enemies myself". I can appreciate that. I could usually deal with extremists and impostors in summary fashion: but it was often friends with excellent ideas in many respects and the best of intentions, those whom I wanted to help, but in whose plans I had little faith, who caused the most heartbreaking tribulations.

The irony of it all is that some of the wildest adventures succeed spectacularly, while sane movements languish.

When the Unitarian Church was first started in Los Angeles it became the temporary catchall for many "come-outers" — people dissatisfied with the conventional religions. Some of those who later became leaders in Christian Science, in Spiritualism, in Theosophy, and various phases of New Thought tried the Unitarian Church for a time, but did not find enough alcohol in its gospel to satisfy their craving. When people lose faith in the old theological miracles, they are soon likely to be found running pell-mell after some new miracle — some so-called scientific or psychological miracle

as untenable as the old. Few people, once addicted to an intoxicating religion, find a sober one satisfying.

The fact that mental, moral and spiritual adventurers abound in California is not entirely to its discredit. It shows abundant life and growth, even if some of the growth is parasitical. It is evidence that the intellectual ferment is working. It indicates that an ever increasing number of people are breaking away from the various orthodoxies. Life is less fixed and more vitally fluid than in many other places.

Nor is the fact that many adventurous people temporarily gravitate to the Unitarian church a reproach — quite otherwise. It shows that it does, to some extent at least, live up to its reputation as "liberal". It means headaches for the minister nevertheless, for of the many who call, few are chosen — few choose to stay — and what a lot of trouble a stream of restless, doctrinaire sojourners may make! There is little danger of such a society settling down into self-complacency.

We may take comfort from the fact that in ancient times Athens was the catchall for the innumerable cults of the world. All religions and philosophies, sane and insane — mostly the latter — centered there. But out of that intellectual potpourri came the thoughts that moved mankind and proved to be the one element of sanity in over a thousand years.

During the greater part of the nineteenth century, Massachusetts was the Mecca for the curious cultists of the time. Many thought that Boston and its vicinity was little more than an intellectual and spiritual bedlam, and that no good thing could come from such a Nazareth, yet out of that bedlam

came more sane thinking worthy of survival than from any other section.

Today California is the melting-pot and the proving ground for the dreamers and utopians of the world. Let us hope that it may prove to be one of the Athens of our time. Not all of the intellectual and spiritual eggs that are being deposited here will become addled. Some of them will hatch into gorgeous birds of paradise.

During our early years in Los Angeles a wave of civic, political and economic reform was sweeping the land. This movement first found expression on a national scale through the voice of William Jennings Bryan, and later crystallized around the picturesque personality of Theodore Roosevelt. In neither of these men did I ever have complete confidence.

Bryan was a man of broad, fine humanitarian sympathies, but his mentality was of a shallow evangelistic type that was incapable of plumbing the depths or of taking an accurate measurement of anything. He was an irrepressible crusader whose weapons were mainly words — often words with little meaning. He was an effective campaigner who exercised a widespread influence during his entire lifetime. When Secretary of State he furthered worthy international causes but his influence was not profound and lasting because of a dearth of well-rooted ideas.

Roosevelt was a stronger and abler man than Bryan in almost every way, and more dangerous because he lacked Bryan's moral sensitivity. He was one of the extraordinary men of his time. His remarkably broad range of interests and his ability to absorb and retain facts both from reading

and observation have seldom been equalled. His joy in living and his passion for activity were something to be envied.

Neither of these men were original thinkers; but both were ready absorbers of thought. Neither were leaders in the sense of being ahead of his time; but each could head up a crowd, speak for it, and give it a sense of direction.

There was an element of primitive savagery in Roosevelt, often dominating his life, that was absent in Bryan. Roosevelt would resort to ways and means of accomplishing results that Bryan would not entertain. Bryan's morality was conventional, but it was real, and he would not sacrifice it. Roosevelt always visualized himself as the leading actor in a great drama, and he played his part well, however dangerous, as long as he was sure of an audience. During the early years of his life, he believed a war was highly desirable for the sole purpose of toughening our individual and national fibre. He helped rush us into the Spanish war, not so much to right a wrong as because he believed that it would have a salutary effect on our national character.

In nature he was a sixteenth century buccaneer upon whom many fine twentieth century ideals were grafted. He did much to further our higher ideals, but reverted to the primitive in many severe tests of life. His virtues were surface virtues; inwardly he was sometimes weak and cowardly. For these reasons I could never accept his leadership without serious misgivings. I was always fearful that he would fail in the supreme test.

That I arrived at these conclusions long ago may be seen from the following extract from a public address of mine in June 1911, published in the Los Angeles *Herald*. This was when Roosevelt was at the height of his popularity.

The world has need of men who can see what is to be done today and who can direct the energies of the peoples to these immediate ends. Such a man to a conspicuous degree is Theodore Roosevelt. And yet to me, with all his splendid success and manhood, for which I gave him full credit, he is one of the most pathetic failures in history.

He has fought the people's battles valiantly and strongly. He has championed right things with unflinching courage. He will rightly go down in history as one of the strong and able presidents; but he failed to do the one thing that everything else prepared him to do, and that destiny clearly pointed out to him as the crowning achievement of his career, and the greatest of modern times.

The one imperative call of the age is for a federation of the nations that will enable them to rapidly and safely reduce their military burdens. He was recognized everywhere as the first citizen of the world. People everywhere and of all classes listen to him as to no one else. If he, with his dynamic energy and prestige, had launched a world campaign for peace, while it might have taken several years, it would have been irresistible, and an effective world federation would have been inevitable. Carnegie and scores of others with commercial prestige and unlimited wealth would have reinforced him. It was the psychological moment.

The world federation will come anyway, but it will be delayed. He could have accomplished it more easily and more quickly than anyone else.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

My Five Year Plan

ABOUT the year 1912, after fourteen years of experience in the ministry, I found myself taking stock: subjecting myself and my work to rigid analysis. What was I trying to do? Was I doing anything worth-while? What was the true field of liberal religion, and how could that field be cultivated more effectively? The harvest that the liberal churches were reaping was unsatisfactory in quantity and sometimes questionable in quality.

I realized that I was not primarily a man of action. I could not lead a crusade or organize an effective reform. My achievements must be educational — through preaching and teaching.

This survey and self-examination aroused in me a determination to organize my individual work more effectively. I must mine out of the world's literature — out of the available records of human achievement — more of the gold of essential truth than I had been doing, and I must mint it into coin with a higher purchasing power in the marts of life's higher needs.

I was dissatisfied with the hit-and-miss character of my preaching. Each week usually found me searching for a suitable subject from which to extract something to satisfy the

legitimate hunger and thirst of the people. I frequently went home from church with a frustrated feeling that the bread of life I had offered the people was rather stale and unsatisfying.

I sometimes gave series of sermons, announcing my subjects several weeks in advance, and became convinced that I did better work when I thus held my mind to a definite course of thought and research. I decided to expand this method into a comprehensive program.

I spent the summer vacation (1912) analyzing my past and trying to organize my future. I hauled out my old sermons — an accumulation of fourteen years — and tried to find some order in the chaos. Had there been any logical sequence to my preaching? I tried to recall the character of the sermons that had seemed to serve my congregations best. I determined to concentrate my efforts toward making my future preaching more cumulative in effect.

At the opening service in the fall I startled the members of the congregation by placing in the hands of each one a ten page prospectus of a three year's course of sermons that I proposed to give. This aroused considerable consternation and alarm in the minds of some of my best friends. They were fearful that my preaching would degenerate into sheer bookishness — that my sermons would become "academic", "encyclopedic", "dry-as-dust", "detached from the vital currents of life" and that I would lose all of my congregation but a faithful few.

I tried to forestall these justifiable alarms by brief explanations in the prospectus and in my introductory sermon. I admitted that it was a formidable appearing document. It looked as though I had glanced through a number of volumes

and ended by copying the table of contents of several of them, and had put these forth as subjects for future sermons. I assured them that each subject had been studied long and "prayerfully", as the orthodox would say, and had not been put down until I was fully convinced that it would take us into the heart of some present day perplexity with which we were wrestling, if it were treated dynamically and followed through faithfully.

My first year's subjects were as forbidding an array as ever confronted a congregation. They were all theological. I selected forty of the theological dogmas that had occupied men's minds most intensely during the centuries of Christian world-domination.

I did this because I knew that the human animal was first of all a theologian. He was theological long before he was moral or political. Early man was far more religious than rational or practical. Supernatural explanations of phenomena were much easier than natural or scientific ones. All early governments were theocracies. The priest antedated the preacher, the politician and the educator. The priest was the first dictator and retains many of his early prerogatives today, whether pagan, papist or protestant.

Man believed he had constant communication with the gods long before he had any intelligent understanding of himself or his fellows. His fancied familiarity with heaven and hell was quite complete before he made any effective attempts to extend his knowledge of the earth. Celestial map making antedated any accurate terrestrial cartography. He was sure that he knew the highway to heaven before he attempted any extensive road building at home.

People thought they knew exactly what God required of them, while the greatest confusion and uncertainty prevailed as to their obligations toward each other. They frequently worshipped their gods with fanatical fervor, while slaughtering their fellows with fiendish ferocity. Devotion to deity was often thought to demand destruction of everything human. Worship is easier than creative work, and is thought by the credulous to bring more desirable results.

For these reasons I wished to clear away some of the theological perplexities that still cluttered our minds, before attempting the more positive purposes of the course.

As I approached each subject I tried to discover the dominant desires and needs that men and women were trying to satisfy when they brought forth the particular dogma or theological belief that we were considering. Were they legitimate needs and desires? Did the dogmas really satisfy them in terms of human adjustment? or only piously push them into a mysterious future to be miraculously resolved?

I sought even more diligently for the corresponding needs and desires that activate us today; and always found in the vast accumulations of knowledge that experience and investigation make available to us, far better answers to our legitimate needs and desires than the theological dogmas could give. The past, as I saw it and understood it, always pointed futureward and made it more humanly alluring.

The second year was devoted to personalities. People were loyal to persons before they were loyal to principles. I selected forty outstanding personalities that appeared in the development of European civilization. I did not attempt to select the forty greatest persons, but the forty persons that

would best illustrate the steps by which humanity has made its way from the mythological faiths of ancient times to the more rational faiths that have come with modern enlightenment. Each character typified some unique phase of experience — some vital search for truth or some crucial movement in human affairs that carried a living message for our time. This was the least difficult year of the course, as it is easier to interest people in personalities than it is in anything except supernatural speculations. It is also easier to illustrate principles by personality than in any other way.

The third year was devoted to ethical principles. This was the most difficult thing I ever attempted — and the most important. Nothing will fall quite so flat in its appeal to human beings as an abstract moral truth, however vital it may be. About a dozen ethical societies, whose sole function is to hold aloft the moral standards that are almost universally recognized as necessary to society's highest well-being, have managed to drag out a precarious existence for the past generation in the whole of Europe and America, while churches and theological institutions of every conceivable character, with their primitively fantastic promises of the impossible, have flourished the world over like the proverbial green bay tree. This illustrates the difference between a purely ethical appeal and a primitive theological appeal. No institutional religion has ever flourished that did not promise the impossible. Purely reasonable religions have never yet gained any appreciable institutional strength, and are not likely to do so in the near future.

Realizing this, I knew that I must dramatize my ethical subjects quite vividly if I was to get anywhere with them.

I thus selected the most strikingly interesting movements in history to illustrate the various steps by which man has reached his highest ethical standards. I gave one long series of sermons under the caption "Putting the Devil to Work, or, Redeeming the Waste Forces of Life". I endeavored to show how all of the forces known to man are either devil or divinity, depending upon the way we meet them or the uses to which we put them. I thus tried to show that it was the ethical element lurking in every theological dogma that was the redeeming feature of it.

I supplemented my Sunday morning sermons with a thoroughgoing course of midweek lectures covering the historical development of Christianity, beginning with the New Testament and following the growth of Christianity down through the centuries, ending with Billy Sunday who was giving a series of Revival services in Los Angeles at the time. These midweek meetings were remarkably well attended. At times the church school auditorium would not accommodate the people and we used the church auditorium.

I succeeded sufficiently well with my three year adventure to add two more years to it immediately, thus rounding out a five year plan. In my three year course, my historical subjects were all European. I crossed the ocean and made my supplementary course distinctly American. I dwelt upon the men and movements that made America what it is. The pioneering movements, the political movements, the theological movements, the educational and cultural movements, the reforming movements, and the economic movements, were each treated in a separate series of sermons. My effort

always was to find the faith that fired the leaders and held them steadfast.

My midweek meetings were rather unique in character during our American course. I took the same subject that I intended to use the next Sunday morning and gave a Thursday evening talk on it. Having read myself full of the subject, I threw my material at my audience without much organization, using such language as I could get hold of on the spur of the moment. Then the audience was invited to go after the material hammer and tongs, without fear or favor, and do their worst as well as their best with it. They often entered into these free-for-alls with much gusto, including criticism and commendations of the previous week's work as well. Then with the benefit of this overhauling, I would spend my Friday and Saturday producing a carefully thought out and carefully worded sermon for Sunday morning. The final sermon was often surprisingly different from the initial foray. The midweek meetings were remarkably well attended, sometimes forcing us to use the church auditorium to accommodate the audience.

I was trying to combine the advantages of the college lecturer and the pulpit preacher, and feel that I succeeded fairly well. We do not expect the college teacher merely to grab at some fragment of his subject each week without any definite plan or purpose, as so many preachers do in their pulpit work. We expect the teacher not only to know pretty definitely the field he intends to cover during the year, but to know quite specifically in advance what he intends to do in each individual lecture. The greatest danger of the college professor is not that he fall into the indefiniteness of

the preacher, but that he fall into the deadly definiteness of repeating his lectures again and again without changing a word or an accent. The preacher does not escape this peril either, for some of them do follow the lines of least resistance, simply reversing the "barrel" and repeating their sermons verbatim every time they change parishes.

Of course the live teacher and the live preacher are both rethinking their subjects all the time and are re-expressing them almost beyond recognition. In my five years' course, I used freely the subjects and the material that I had used in my fourteen years of experience, but it was all reborn in the new sequence into which it was put.

I never worked so hard in my life as I did during this period. I never enjoyed my work so well, nor obtained so wholesome a reaction from it. I knew more definitely what I was trying to do than I had known before. I was accepting a challenge. I was doing what many said could not be done. My reading, my conversation, my visiting and vagrant thinking seemed to point up and fit together as never before. My subjects, as I came to them, took on meaning. I seemed to have done some effective unconscious work on them and they ripened under treatment. While my subjects lead up one to another and were cumulative in effect, I was very careful to make each subject a distinct sermon, complete in itself, so the casual listener would get it without effort, and the regular listener's memory would not be overtaxed.

Current events were not neglected. One of the amazing facts in my experience is the way contemporary happenings fit into the subject being treated, whether it be ancient Gnosticism or present day psychoanalysis. All subjects that have actively occupied the human mind are live subjects,

however old or however new, to the person who keeps his own mind alive and growing. If one can bring the past to life and vitally tie it into the living present, it has a momentum and a driving force that no purely contemporary subject has.

I concluded my course with a more satisfactory sense of achievement than I had ever experienced before. I had met the challenge. I enjoyed the gratifying feeling of having my mind under control. I could put it to work almost anywhere and depend upon it to bring forth something of vital worth. I had gained a more comprehensive and practical understanding of the whole sweep of human events. Everything was grist that came to my mill. It fitted in somewhere. It was an integral part of the life stream I was examining and interpreting.

I did not lose my congregation as had been predicted. It was larger at the end of the course than at the beginning, and the attendants were much more regular. The number of accessions to the society were gratifying, and few of them were of a peripatetic character.

The chief gain was in the sense of solidarity acquired: in the mutual confidence established between minister and people. I knew that I could depend upon those who had continued unflagging in their interest through that long course. They knew their minds. They would not desert the minister and would remain faithful to the work in hand. The members of the congregation had a profound respect for a minister who was willing to hold himself to such a grueling task of study, clarification and exposition. They

knew that he had more important work to do than to be pampering those who were seeking a more sensational and less substantial diet.

My place in the community was established. Thoughtful people knew that there was little shoddy in the work being done in the Unitarian Church. Somewhat extensive excerpts from my sermons were printed in the Monday papers and were read by many who did not attend our church.

CHAPTER TWELVE

War Time Worries

THE MOST painfully anxious portion of my ministry was the war period, from 1914 to 1918, and the years immediately following.

To what extent my Quaker inheritance and nurture affected me I do not know. To men like Theodore Roosevelt the Quaker was a pious coward. Others saw in the general attitude and practice of Friends courage of a higher order than militarism could muster. I did not qualify in either of these categories. If I were a coward, I was not a pious one. Neither did I ever lay claim to outstanding courage of any kind.

Although I was a birthright member of the Society of Friends until I was twenty-three, I have never claimed to be a Quaker. I am too rational a compromiser for that. I am neither dogmatic enough nor mystical enough to be a consistent Quaker. And yet some of their outstanding characteristics seem to be deeply imbedded in my nature. In becoming a Unitarian by conviction, it has always seemed to me that I simply rationalized Quakerism.

I have never been a dogmatic peace-at-any-price man. That seems to me to be an irrational position. We are to use all of

the powers we possess including personal physical force. The only question is, when and how are we to use it. If we realize the growing limitations of arbitrary, physical force for accomplishing desired results, we shall get rid of the abuse and misuse of physical force sooner than we will by arbitrarily trying to rule it out altogether.

We talk much about the price of peace, when what we are really interested in is the terrible price of war. The older I grow the surer I am that the price of war is always too high. The more I study our American history the more I am convinced that we have never gained anything by our wars that was commensurate with the cost. We are still paying for them at compound interest in both material and spiritual coin. A small amount of patient intelligence used at the right time and in the right place, would have accomplished far more than was ever gained by war.

During the sixteen years of my ministry prior to the outbreak of war in 1914, I bombarded my congregations with peace proposals and peace talk more persistently than I did later. I frequently said that we were living in a fool's paradise as far as permanent peace was concerned. That the world was blindly and blandly drifting toward war I was sure, and unless something was done to change the drift, war was bound to ensue.

The popular slogan, "the way to insure peace is to prepare for them at compound interest in both material and spiritual time. The increment of truth in it is what makes it so deadly. It may avert war for a time, but makes it doubly sure eventually, and greatly intensifies it when it does come. It is an effective slogan because it soothes us into quiescence

by appealing to both our pacific and belligerent propensities.

Such a slogan assumes that we shall always be right — a very dangerous assumption, as it tends to dull our sensibilities as to what is right. No person or nation ever is always right. To be physically powerful tends to bring about both the conscious and unconscious identification of might with right, and in proportion as that identification takes place, right slips out of the picture entirely, and might becomes our only guide. The experience of Germany is ample proof of the deadliness of making such a slogan dominant.

To have peace we must prepare for it, and preparation for peace is not a simple, do-nothing matter. It requires more dynamic action and courage than preparation for war. We can easily drift into war; we do not drift into peace. No negative program will do. Merely shouting such negative slogans as "disarm" and "no more war" confuse rather than clarify.

War is planned cooperative violence on a national scale. Peace is planned cooperative integration on an international scale, calling for superior administrative and diplomatic ability. War appeals to all of our primitive prejudices and passions — easy to arouse. Peace means overcoming our primitive prejudices and keeping our elemental passions in leash — difficult in the extreme. One nation can precipitate war. It takes virtually all nations to maintain enduring peace.

Peace within a nation depends upon the good will of the people constituting it; but that good will must be so organized and implemented that it can control and restrain the outbreaks of ill will that are sure to occur. The same is true of nations. We can have world peace only when international good will is so organized and implemented that it can

restrain the temporary ill will that springs up in individual nations. International good will must also be implemented to review and ease tensions that are sure to arise among nations and peoples. World government can do this, and it is probable that nothing else can.

These fundamental facts have been clear to me from my school days onward. That is the reason I have so avidly seized upon every movement that promised a possible drawing together of nations in a better understanding of their mutual interests. International tariff wars and other trade reprisals have always alarmed me as being possible preludes to more serious warfare. Such slogans as "America First" and "hundred percent American" indicate a kind of nationalistic in-breeding that is unhealthy.

One might scan the weekly printed calendars of the Los Angeles church during the first three years of World War I without seeing anything to indicate that a great war was waging. That does not mean that the war was not uppermost in our minds, or that it was being ignored. Seldom did a week pass without pointed reference to it, but it was treated as incidental to something else.

I was in the midst of my five year course of sermons when the war broke in 1914. That was a lifesaver: my work was cut out for me. I did not flounder around in a hectic emotional state, induced by the disturbing effect of the war. I was just then giving a three months' series under the general caption, "Putting the Devil to Work or Redeeming the Waste Forces of Life". The underlying thought was that all unused or misused forces are evil, or devil, potentially or actively. Using these forces or redirecting them along crea-

tive or useful lines is redeeming them, or putting the devil to work — converting devil into deity. Some of the specific subjects were, "The devil of doubt — the way of faith", "The devil of despair — the way of hope", "The devil of hate — the way of love", "The devil of poverty — the way of plenty", "The devil of envy — the way of sympathy". I was dealing with fundamental, ethical principles in concrete and specific ways. It was all of these little devils working together that constituted the big war devil. These sermon topics seemed to be just fitted for the occasion. I hardly know how I should have made out if the war had not come along to illustrate my subjects! Every week some incident or phase of the war seemed to be what I needed to clinch my arguments. So it was all through the war. I was dealing with old time, basic subjects, that kept my feet firmly planted on the ground, and yet furnished the best possible outlet for the treatment of current events.

When the war broke we all assumed that it would be short and terrible. Germany and her allies would either win quickly, as in 1871, or break. We did not see how any nation could hold out for six months. All supplies would soon be exhausted and collapse would be inescapable. To our amazement the armies lined up by the millions, stood toe to toe and slaughtered each other without cessation for three years and no break was in sight! The strain and suspense became unendurable and our entrance into the war was a relief to most of us. We simply could not sit on the side lines, inactive, and see the carnage go on indefinitely. We must do something to end it or cease to be human. To remain inactive was to become passive participants in the

carnage — the most cowardly kind of participation. We are our brothers' keepers however much we may, at times, dislike it.

I did not advocate our entrance into the war, but once in I took the position that it was as justifiable as any war we had ever fought — far more so than some of them. I stated from the pulpit that although I was not a peace-at-any-price man I regarded war as the worst way of meeting any situation and it should be accepted only as a last resort. I confessed that I had never been able to justify fully in my own mind any of our wars — not even the Revolutionary war or the war between the states. In neither case had the "last resort" stage been reached. I knew that few people agreed with me. The majority of Americans not only justified the two wars mentioned but gloried in them, and regarded my attitude as almost treasonable. Both northern and southern people justified their participation in the war between the states although for different reasons. I could not see how those who gloried in our American wars on the ground that they were in the interests of human liberty, could be content to stand by longer and see the rape of Belgium grow into the rape of France and the brutal subjugation of all Europe.

I tried to be a good citizen and abide by the will of the majority. I spent my evenings speaking in the theaters and other places as a "four minute man" and was active in the sale of liberty bonds. I did not use the ready-made speeches that were given me, but composed my own with much care, being careful not to fan the hysteria of hate that swept over the land.

I upheld the pacifists, who justified none of our wars, in their opposition to the one we were engaged in. It seemed

to me that they were entirely consistent and wholly sincere. I denounced in no uncertain terms the harsh treatment that was meted out to some of our conscientious objectors. I am glad that in the latest war this question was handled in a more sensible way. I also upheld those who justified our entrance into the European war, if they justified our Revolutionary War and our Civil War, and gloried in them. I felt that they were bound to justify the World War for the same reason that they justified our other wars, and were as consistent and sincere as the pacifists.

I was anxious to impress upon people the real character of war — that it meant the surrender and often the repudiation of virtually everything that we prized most and that had been slowly built up by tremendous and persistent effort.

When people complained of atrocities, poison gas, the bombing of women and children and the use of dum-dum bullets, I maintained that war itself was the one supreme atrocity. Once we accept war at all we acquiesce in every possible means of destruction and injury that diabolical human ingenuity can devise. Bombing women and children may be poor strategy, and is to be criticized on that ground alone. Having accepted war, anything is justifiable that is believed to contribute to winning it.

More than once I spoke of the folly of unleashing the dogs of war and then trying to hold on to their tails, or filing their teeth to prevent them from being too rough. The way to control the dogs of war is not to breed them!

Judge Jackson certainly was right in holding that the war makers are the arch villains who should be tried first and punished most severely. To permit the heads of governments to

escape trial and punishment by international tribunals, while seeking out and punishing the perpetrators of atrocities incidental to the war, because of some legalistic infringement of the so-called rules of war, is a travesty on justice. If any are to be punished let the punishment begin at the top where the guilt and responsibility is greatest.

Some people took the war lightly — treating it as an international sporting proposition. I wanted everyone to appreciate fully that war is just what Sherman said it is. The sooner we fully realize that, the sooner wars will cease.

I had no delusions about the chastening effects of war. People were continually chattering about humanity coming out of the war cleansed and purified as by fire — regenerate and ready to become finer citizens of the world. There is an increment of truth in this attitude. Some people do find themselves and begin a new life as the result of a serious crisis that has arisen, be it war or earthquake. They are the exceptions that are so few and far between that they stand out and attract attention. The total effect of war upon humanity is degrading, stupifying and brutalizing. Post war periods are times of terrible moral laxness and spiritual debasement — many people being totally unfitted for civilian life.

I tried to show how the simpering, self-indulgent sentimentality that characterized the attitude of many emotional women and girls in their contacts with soldiers, under the delusion of being highly patriotic, was in many instances leading to sex tragedies, the evil consequences of which might persist for generations. The more direct participation of women in the last war was, I believe, conducive to a more wholesome attitude between soldiers and women than

prevailed before. I wanted everyone to appreciate as far as possible the terrible cost of all war.

The dread of what would follow the war disturbed me even more than the war itself, and I frequently expressed my anxiety. I knew that we could go through the war; the tiger in us would attend to that. Fighting courage, once the emotions are set on fire, is the most primitive and universal kind of bravery. Animals are not wanting in such bravery.

I maintained that there was no virtue in merely winning the war — far from it. What was done with the winnings would be the test. Emerging victorious from the battlefield is a test of brute force not of virtue — and evil is quite as likely to succeed as virtue. When we accept the gage of battle we have for the time being thrown virtue to the wind, and usually find it more difficult to pick up again than we anticipate.

I reiterated again and again that the war was lost, and worse than lost, no matter who gained the military decision, unless there emerged from the war an effective international tribunal for the adjustment of international questions. We would have brutalized and debased ourselves to no purpose whatsoever. I did everything I could to puncture the delusion that was continually arising that the war was a holy crusade that would lift us all to the heights from which we should never descend, and once having won the war, we should drift into Utopia and live happily ever after. I asserted that the winners of wars were losers as often as not.

I belonged to a small discussion club that included some of the leading citizens of Los Angeles. We met fortnightly and discussed vital questions of human interest often far into

the night. During war time the one underlying question that concerned us was the status of the nations after the war. It was taken for granted that a federation must ensue and that our nation must take the lead. Everything pointed to the United States as the keystone to the international arch, without which it would not be strong enough to bear the burdens that would descend upon it. What kind of a federation, was the burning question. Every plan that arose out of the welter was discussed with avidity. Some of the plans were grotesque enough, but all were considered seriously. It was the one overshadowing topic.

When the plan for the League of Nations was announced, I threw myself into its support without reserve. It was the one question that has arisen in my lifetime to which I gave myself with complete abandon. I talked League of Nations and the necessity for international interdependence wherever I went.

When the League was defeated in the home of its birth, by the only nation that could give it real substance, I came nearer being prostrated by a deep-seated heartsickness than by any public question that has arisen in my lifetime. Neither the war itself, nor anything that happened during the war, plunged me into such despair as did that diplomatic debacle. For us to participate in a world war to end war, and then refuse to participate in a world peace to make good that purpose seemed like the most preposterous and tragic of contradictions.

It was not only the defeat of the League, but the way in which the defeat was brought about that was excruciatingly disheartening. If the nation that had originated the principle of federation and had prospered by the practice of it as no

other nation had prospered by anything, and whose future security depended upon the application of that principle to the rest of the world — if the nation whose whole life was an exemplification of that principle, turned its back on it at the most critical time in history, how could we expect anything but world anarchy in the future? If the best men we could choose to represent us in Congress would let petty, partisan politics and personal jealousies blind them to the world crisis that hung on their actions, what hope was there for democracy and the principles for which we had always stood.

I gradually recovered from my depressed condition, and envisaged the League functioning haltingly, until we recovered our sanity and recognized our responsibilities and opportunities. I had relapses as time passed and people became so completely occupied with their own sordid speculations and ventures that they turned all of our international interests over to a band of vociferous isolationists, who were past masters at playing upon the primitive passions and sentimental prejudices of people!

I grasped eagerly at every straw of encouragement. I sang paeans of praise for the Locarno Treaty which seemed to be an enormous step in the right direction. In looking forward to a European trip I planned to make Locarno and Geneva focal points of the journey, seeing them as future shrines that people would visit in fond remembrance, when peace on earth and good will to men became established. I hailed the Briand-Kellogg Pact as a way mark. I knew that it was too vague and glittering a generality to be a real instrument of accord, but I hoped that it would strengthen people's

faith in the League of Nations, and would be implemented by other specific acts similar to the Locarno Treaty.

I may have been over-sanguine as to what the League of Nations might accomplish, but I hardly think so. I had no delusions about a world Utopia following in its wake. I knew that more difficult international seas lay ahead than had been weathered, but hoped that almost any international organization, that was truly international, might prevent a world debacle at least. I still believe that our wholehearted participation in the League might have eased the tensions sufficiently to have prevented the rise of Nazism and the reign of terror that later encompassed the world.

No power in heaven or on earth could guarantee the success of the League. There is no such thing as absolute certainty. All that men and nations can do is take the chance that arises. No nation, since the beginning of time, ever had such a chance for world service as that which came to the United States at the close of the war, and no nation ever fumbled an opportunity more ignominiously.

More potent than any other single factor in producing war or peace is the economic system that prevails in the world. The older I grow the surer I am that war is largely economic competition carried to its logical conclusion, though many other incentives enter into it. If this is true, then wars are almost inevitable as long as competition remains the dominant force in our economic life.

In a comparatively primitive and simple society, in which the competing units are small and widely distributed, wars are local and less deadly. As the units of competition become vast, often almost world-wide in extent, highly organized and

mechanized, blindly intense and self-centered in their individual drives, wars involve the entire world and become almost infinitely devastating. Nations then become little more than pawns that the economic forces blindly hurl at each other.

Not until competition takes second place to cooperation, and profits wait on service, not only in our own nation but in all industrial nations, can we have enduring peace. Nazism is competition at its worst — nationalized and carried to its logical conclusion. It is only as we recognize this and act accordingly that there is hope for the future. Nazism is the hideous thing we may become if we do not mend our ways.

I had fervently hoped that our competitive-profit system might peacefully evolve into a cooperative-service system and extreme violence be avoided. But this was not to be. Old habits were so firmly set to the old order, and the people of influence and power so strenuously resisted the necessary changes, that we were hurled into a world revolution more devastating in its effects than any of us dreamed was possible. Our boasted and boastful competitive system that had done so much for us in the past was the lion in the path that made cowards of us all. We were afraid of the future and held tenaciously to the good old past until the catastrophe engulfed us.

Such a transition did take place during Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration under the pressure of war's necessities, but it was entirely abnormal. People will submit to changes under the exigencies of war that they will resist under other conditions. The benefits of such changes as have taken place in the past few years have all been swallowed up in the maw of war. It is doubtful if they can be turned into normal channels, now that war pressure is removed. Many of

the more influential people occupying strategic positions, braced themselves for a determined effort to bring back the old order as soon as the war was over. Now that the war pressure is removed the cry "back to free enterprise" goes up in an overwhelming crescendo: back to the good old days of stocks, bonds, profits and adventurous investments of all kinds. The capitalist system with its uncertainties and great possibilities appeals to the gambling habits and instincts of great numbers of the more vociferous public, who are ready to put civilization on the gaming table, though they know it is rigged against them.

The termination of the late war is bringing to the surface many reactionary forces similar to those of 1920 and following — perhaps even more callously aggressive. Influential people are praying for another Harding-Coolidge regime with the slogan of, "To hell with the idealists and all of their works".

I sometimes fear that the old order will resist until it is burned out in the flames kindled by its own clashing interests: then out of the ashes of that tragic catastrophe the new order may possibly arise. That would be the most painful and wasteful process of achievement: but such is the price that humanity often forces itself to pay.

We all admit, in the abstract, that sweeping and drastic changes in our economic and social order are due, but we are so conditioned by old habits that we strenuously resist any specific program offered, whereby the necessary adjustments may be made.

During the period of post-war "prosperity", in the hectic

twenties, I was subject to fever and chills in my attitude toward world affairs. Hope and despair chased each other through my system in a disturbing manner. My own judgment told me that we were riding for a terrific fall, but my self-confidence quailed before the bluff assurances of many big businessmen that permanent prosperity had at last arrived. I was so anxious to believe what appeared to be true, that I at times convinced myself that others could see where I was blind.

The most disquieting feature of the time was the widespread attitude that prevailed toward international war debts. Many people naïvely assumed that war debts were not one whit different from legitimate peace time investments and should be treated precisely the same way. They felt justified in regarding the huge amounts that European nations owed us as so much vital capital from which handsome returns should flow.

It was not uncommon to hear those denounced as traitors and criminals who suggested that war debts, being in a different category from many other debts, should be treated in an entirely different way. "A debt is a debt and that is all there is to it" was a dogmatic slogan that swept all before it in the popular mind. President Coolidge's laconic utterance, "They hired it, didn't they", was accepted as the summation of wisdom that pounded down all opposition.

It was positively alarming to hear people roundly abusing Great Britain and France for not meeting their just and sacred obligations, while we were continually enacting sacred tariff laws that made it impossible for them to pay the debts, even if they could otherwise have done so.

I had read and re-read Norman Angel's *Great Illusion*

and other books on international relations, and before the war began, saw clearly, as I believed, that "debts" are of many kinds, "good", "bad" and "indifferent" from a purely economic point of view, and to attempt to treat them all alike is one of the most serious economic fallacies. "Good" debts are productive investments from which there is a normal back flow to the creditor. "Bad" debts are dead losses from which there is no normal back flow of any kind. War debts are pre-eminently "bad" because there is no possible legitimate return for money that goes into war or war material.

People have not been slow to realize that when they send young men to their death, they cannot return to the hearts and homes of their families and remain productive members of society; but until recently have held fast to the delusion that they could send their dollars to war to be shot away and yet have them return bringing other dollars with them to enrich their former owners. As a matter of fact dollars that are sent to war are the deadest things on this planet and no power in heaven or on earth can bring them to life and restore their original value. Few delusions have been more disastrous than the delusions that have prevailed as to the character of debts.

It became plain to me that arbitrary transfers of wealth from one nation to another, such as occur in the payment of large indemnities and war debts, are equally harmful to the receiving and the paying nations. It destroys values by interfering with the normal flow of trade in response to the pressure of supply and demand, by which economic values are created. War debts and indemnities are thus among the most

potent causes of the economic anarchy that follows great wars.

While the war was still on, I said repeatedly that I dreaded the aftermath of the war even more than the war itself — that post-war reconstruction muddles often caused more bitterness and suffering than war, and that attempts on the part of the victors to collect huge indemnities would contribute to one of the worst economic muddles in history.

When I saw that the nations were bent on repeating the post war blunders of the past on a colossal scale, I could not remain silent. I made repeated allusions in my sermons to the folly of trying to collect war debts and indemnities, and on February 22, 1922, I devoted an entire address to the subject. The address was printed in the newspapers and I have a copy of it before me now, so I am not romancing when I give a little of the import of it.

My contention was that the arbitrary transfer of eleven billions of dollars to this country was utterly fantastic. There was no possible way in which it could be done, and if it were possible it would wreck the entire economy of the nation. I asserted that even the payment of the interest on so vast a sum, if it could be done, would cause endless economic confusion. If paid in gold it would bring disastrous inflation, and if paid in goods, the only other way, would bring an equally disastrous depression.

I confined myself entirely to the economic aspects of the question, knowing well that if I took any other ground I would be at once dismissed as a harmless, starry eyed idealist. The position I took then is so universally accepted now, that it seems unbelievable that it should have been regarded as almost treasonable in 1922.

If today we had the good judgment and farseeing courage to treat our domestic war debts as capital levies, and would discharge them by paying a small percent of the capital each year, while cancelling all interest, it would go far toward easing a well-nigh impossible situation.

Of course we will do nothing so sensible as that! It would be too drastic a reversal of established, legalistic dogmas that are dragging us to our doom.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

“East Is East and West Is West”

WE DID not know at the time why we left Los Angeles at the end of twelve years and went to New Bedford, Massachusetts. It was one of those inexplicable things that people do. If anyone had told us a short time previous to the change that we would voluntarily leave the caressing California climate and brave the cantankerous New England weather it would have seemed wholly improbable.

The longest that any minister had served the Los Angeles church prior to our time was six years. I had warned the people that they should act soon if they were likely to want a change, as we were becoming so rooted to the soil that it would soon be difficult to transplant us. They appeared well-content to have it so.

In the year 1920 the newly organized Laymen's League was spending money in a very freehanded way — among other things arranging for elaborate exchanges of ministers between the east and the west. Mrs. Hodgkin and I were beneficiaries of that generous largesse. We made a grand tour of the United States, occupying about six weeks, entirely

at the expense of the League. If my memory serves me right, I had speaking engagements in New Orleans, Boston, New Bedford, Des Moines, Omaha, Lincoln, Topeka and Wichita. The New Bedford pulpit was vacant and many candidates were being heard. I was only filling in for a Sunday and neither the members of the congregation nor I had any thought of ever seeing each other again. Our complete disinterestedness is evidenced by the fact that Mrs. Hodgkin preferred to visit one of the Boston Church Schools to accompanying me for the day. I had no notion of being a candidate anywhere. That was probably the crux of the matter. If I had entertained any thought of speaking as a candidate I would doubtless have given a very carefully prepared address in which I should have tried to cover the whole general field of religion, speaking the last word on all outstanding issues — and made no more impression on the congregation than did the other candidates. I have no memory of what I said, but I probably took the subject that was uppermost in my mind, and it proved to be fresh, dynamic and suggestive, in contrast to what candidating sermons are likely to be. They insisted on my coming again, bringing Mrs. Hodgkin, and meeting the people. The outcome was that when we reached home a month later an unequivocal call to become minister of the First Congregational Society of New Bedford awaited us. Seldom do staid old New England parishes act with such precipitation.

When we faced the actual decision of going or remaining we found it a difficult one to make. No outside consideration tipped the scale decidedly as was the case when we came to Los Angeles — my father's and mother's need of us. We were

a happy and united church family. The congregation was my congregation as completely as could well be. In a place of such rapid change and keen competition as existed in Los Angeles, shifts of affiliation were easy. I knew that no one would remain in the congregation at the end of twelve years who was dissatisfied with the minister. The members left nothing undone to assure us of their satisfaction.

I had served the society twice as long as any of my predecessors. Twelve years amid such a shifting population as characterized Southern California gave one a sense of being a fixture. We had settled into the comfortable feeling that Los Angeles would be our home for the remainder of our days.

While it was difficult to find any decisive reason for either going or remaining, many purely personal concerns stirred me much more deeply than anything that appeared upon the surface. At the end of a decade or so a conscientious minister is quite sure to have a strong sense of having preached himself out, and a feeling that a complete change is imperative, however strongly attached he may be to the people and the locality. What more can he give? He feels that he is feeding his congregation on threshed-out straw. His hearers must know what he has to say on every issue that arises. The more intensely he wishes to stay, the surer he is that his time is up and he ought to move on. The very loyalty of his congregation tells him that his work is done. The readiness with which they accept him and his message dulls the critical spirit in them to an unwholesome degree. A change will put both the minister and the members of the congregation more on their mettle.

These feelings, accentuated by the post-war restlessness,

were the deciding factor in my case, I am sure. It is difficult to understand how intense and how universal that post-war restlessness was. Everyone that I knew wanted to get away from where he was and do something different, though few could give any coherent reason for dissatisfaction.

The wear and tear on a minister in a restless place like Los Angeles is terrific; and when war time tensions are added, it is almost overwhelming. I felt worn to a frazzle, not so much by the work I was doing, as by a haunting sense of what I was not doing, though I could not tell what it was.

I had thrown myself into the League of Nations controversy with all of the abandonment of which I was capable. The sickening way in which it flattened out came nearer flooring me than any public issue I had ever faced. For our nation to plunge into a world war and then refuse to participate in a world peace seemed to be an ominous foreboding of disaster. I had a desire to encounter new scenes and faces that would not remind me of the high hopes and bitter disappointments of the past, but would help me get hold of a new set of interests to which I could give my unqualified allegiance. For frontier born people who had spent their lives in the restless west, a firmly rooted New England parish ought to be a challenging adventure that would call out the utmost in them.

I knew that with the post-war expansion must come the relocation of the church in Los Angeles and the erection of a permanent structure. We all regarded the Flower Street building as a temporary home, though a convenient one. The thought of coordinating and leading a highly individualistic group with diverse views as to what a modern church should

be, into a new community filled me with dread. I felt that almost anyone else could do it better than I.

When the New Bedford society, with a beautiful church building that would stand forever, and the society itself firmly rooted in the community, was offered me without my lifting a hand, I could not resist.

After the irrevocable decision had been made, and we came to realize fully how deeply our heart strings had grown into the society and the community of Los Angeles, we experienced not a few deep regrets that the call to another field had come to us. Having put our hands to the plow we could not turn back.

In no religious denomination were the differences between "eastern" and "western" churches so marked as in the Unitarian fellowship. In New England the Unitarian was usually the old deeply-rooted "First Church". In the west it was the newest of all the churches, and had virtually no roots at all. New England Unitarians clung tenaciously to their long established traditions, while in the west, Unitarianism was largely a revolt against traditions of all kinds.

The pioneer movement in America was mainly Protestant. Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians and to some extent Congregationalists ploughed their dogmas into the soil with the first furrows that were turned. The great Catholic tide came later — the early Catholics being hewers of wood and drawers of water for the Protestants who prospered and were in need of "hired help".

The few Unitarian churches in the west came into existence after the soil had been pre-empted by the dogmatically

aggressive orthodox bodies, that depended largely upon a crass crude revivalism to sweep everything before it by sheer emotional and institutional fury. Such tempestuous expressions of religion, often very intolerant and overbearing, were offensive to those inclined toward more reasonable interpretations of life. Unitarian and Universalist churches often sprang up spontaneously in the wake of revivalistic excesses. The membership of these churches was usually quite varied in character, having been drawn together for the time being by diverse influences. Many were sturdy, self-reliant men and women who had thought their way out of the prevailing orthodoxy, and felt the need for more rational religious nurture. Not a few were brilliant visionaries who flitted from flower to flower in search of whatever Utopia seemed to be budding. The most troublesome element were the disaffected orthodox who made the "free church" a vantage point from which to air their grievances. The cement of these western churches was likely to be a few families from older Unitarian churches who knew to some extent what a liberal church could and could not do. The one thing that they had in common was a forward-looking attitude, though their expectations as to what the future might bring were varied indeed.

A majority of the Unitarians in the west were in the truth-seeking stage, while not a few of those in the east felt that they had inherited the truth from their nineteenth century ancestors. Channing, Parker, Emerson, Clark, Hale and Savage, they believed, had done all the thinking there was to do, and our work consisted of cultivating the soil they had broken, and reaping the harvest of their sowing.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century there were in every community a number of aggressively anti-church people who accepted Robert G. Ingersoll as their leader. They were rough and ready, hard-boiled and argumentative, with keener minds and more modern knowledge than the church groups. They were usually active in reform and humanitarian movements in the communities in which they lived. It is difficult to understand now how widespread Ingersoll's influence was in those days. The Unitarians, so far as this group and the revivalistic Christians were concerned, were between the devil and the deep sea. They were not Christian enough to go with the orthodox, and they were not anti-Christian enough for the agnostics. Some of the Ingersollians toned down and made good Unitarian church members, but for the most part they were too intensely individual to fit into any organization.

When we went east I found myself the minister of a church deeply rooted in the community soil — a church to which more of the social elite belonged than any other. It enjoyed a prestige all its own. Local traditions and habits were firmly fixed. This was a new experience for us.

In many of the western churches the minister was the main bond of union. Unitarianism was, to the community, what he preached and what he was. I was under much tension during my twelve years in Los Angeles, feeling my responsibility keenly. The society was largely what I made it. I had an exaggerated sense of my own importance — a feeling that if I relaxed my efforts a moment, a considerable portion of the society would evaporate.

I had not been long in New Bedford before I had pre-

cisely the opposite feeling: the feeling that I counted for very little, that the society was so governed by habits and that church affiliations were so fixed that it made little difference what I did or failed to do, the society would move on about the same.

In the west I felt compelled to exercise constant supervision over the various committees and auxiliary organizations in order that they should function. In New Bedford all of the regular committees and auxiliary organizations functioned with clocklike precision without a hint from me.

In Los Angeles we were often in financial jitters — either away down or away up, seldom on an even keel. When finances would get into such an apparently hopeless snarl that I felt that nothing was left for me to do but run away and jump into the ocean, we would pull ourselves together, clear things up as if by magic, and have a jubilee. In New Bedford, although finances were seldom mentioned in public, they were attended to with the same meticulous precision as were the affairs in the bank on a near-by corner. During the eighteen years of my incumbency my salary was deposited to my account in the First National Bank on the twenty-eighth day of each month, without variation. In the west I felt the need of having a hand in the business affairs of the church, but soon discovered that in New Bedford my business should be confined strictly to preaching and teaching and to the spiritual affairs of the community. I did not attend a single business meeting of the society and only occasionally glimpsed the budget by stealth.

This freedom from business and financial responsibilities was a great boon to me, for financial worries tend to undermine my efficiency in all lines. To this immunity I probably

owe the fact that I was able to retire voluntarily after reaching the allotted three score years and ten while still enjoying fairly good health. I could not have carried the burdens and uncertainties of the Los Angeles parish for eighteen years more without a serious breakdown. I know of no more interesting or inspiring field for a liberal minister than Los Angeles, provided the constant sense of insecurity does not destroy him.

Of course my acute sense of responsibility in Los Angeles and the much lighter burden of responsibility in New Bedford were both exaggerated, for my work was about as important in one place as the other, but it was a very different kind of importance and it took me some time to get the feel of it. Being the Unitarian minister in New Bedford gave one a prestige among the privileged, while it placed one among the freaks in Los Angeles. However, there were so many freaks in Southern California that I was not at all lonesome. One almost felt like apologizing for being "regular" in any respect.

With our settlement in New Bedford the words "Friend" and "Quaker" came back into my life as familiar terms of daily usage, after a hiatus of nearly a generation. They had a somewhat different connotation in these later years from what they had in the days of my childhood and youth. The Friends of Iowa, among whom I spent my formative years, were scattered communities of humble country folk who were regarded as "peculiar". When we mixed with the boys of the "world" and they wanted to humiliate us, the word "Quaker" was often hurled at us in a tone of sneering contempt that was quite withering.

In New Bedford the words "Friend" and "Quaker" were invariably spoken with a respect approaching reverence. This attitude, however, attached to the past rather than the present. Although the Friend's society still functioned in New Bedford, it was only a shadow of what it had been. During the early years of the nineteenth century the Friends were the patrician element of the community — the people of wealth and enterprise who led in virtually all activities. It was the Friends who developed the whaling industry, making New Bedford the whaling capital of the world, better known in more obscure portions of the seven seas than any other American name.

Why the quiet, peace-loving Friends should give themselves so unreservedly to the strenuous, predatory and bloody enterprise of whaling has puzzled many people. It has been said that they were a little too conscientious to engage in the rum traffic and the slave traffic by which so many fortunes were amassed in Salem and Newport, and so they took it out on the leviathans with a vengeance. New Bedford's chief business led its inhabitants farther afield than those of any other city of the world at that time.

The old First Congregational Society of which I was minister inherited a double stream of tradition, the Puritan and the Quaker, but the members usually spoke of their Quaker ancestors with more affection and pride than they did of the sterner Calvinists.

Our society began its existence in deadly conflict with the Quakers, and for once the pacifists got the better of the militants, because they outnumbered them several to one. Our society was not established until 1708, which was much later

than the beginning of many of the "First Churches" of New England. This was due to the fact that the Friends had pre-empted the territory.

Massachusetts Bay Colony treated the Friends with such brutal intolerance that few of them had the hardihood to attempt to settle within her borders, but large numbers of them "squatted" in the outlying sections of the more tolerant Plymouth colony. The early settlers in the territory between Buzzards Bay and the Rhode Island border were mostly Friends with a considerable sprinkling of liberty loving Baptists. They were tolerated rather than welcomed by the older inhabitants around Plymouth, but they prospered and became numerous, meeting in the larger homes or in the open for their silent worship.

Only one legally "true" religion was recognized in the New England colonies at that time — the Puritan religion as set forth in the established Congregational churches. All other religions were outlawed. The authorities in Plymouth became disturbed in mind at sight of the heretical Friends flourishing in contentment to the west of them, but within the domain of their legal authority. They were torn between their naturally tolerant disposition and their stern sense of duty, which bade them be intolerant toward all religions but their own.

The Plymouth authorities repeatedly admonished the heretics to forsake their evil ways and establish the "true" church, but the disciples of the inner light continued steadfastly to trust their own illumination. A committee from Plymouth, the seat of authority, visited them and vigorously urged them to establish a "true" church before their folly brought serious retribution. Nothing came from this effort, and after

the colonies were devastated by King Philip's War it was emphatically declared from many pulpits that this terrible calamity was clearly the wrath of a righteous God kindled by the heresy that flourished in their midst. The weak point in this argument lay in the apparent fact that the savages, the agent of the avenging God, did not get the message straight, for they went about strafing the saints as freely as the sinners.

With the absorption of Plymouth colony into Massachusetts Bay colony, Friends found themselves facing sterner masters. The Boston authorities, more inclined to command than admonish, issued peremptory orders for a "true" church to be established without delay in Dartmouth — the name of the area between Buzzard's Bay and Rhode Island. This ukase being ignored the authorities finally took action, sending a young Harvard graduate, Rev. Samuel Hunt, into the recalcitrant community to preach the gospel to them, and levying an assessment against the inhabitants for his support. It seems that the local authorities had to pass on all tax bills levied by the authorities in Boston for local affairs, before they could become effective, and the Dartmouth selectmen instead of approving the tax for the support of the local church, struck it out and refused to pay it. The result was, that after some bickering, the selectmen — all Friends — were arrested and thrown into jail.

The young minister, being a man of peace, urged the authorities to release the men from jail and let him see what he could do to pour oil on the troubled waters. He tried to get voluntary support for the church, but was apparently unsuccessful. Ultimately the wrathful authorities in Boston

levied another and heavier tax and when payment was refused, again lodged the offenders in jail, this time keeping them there for a year and a half. The thrifty Quakers quickly raised by subscription seven times the amount demanded, but used it for the purpose of contesting the case and to care for the families of those incarcerated. They carried their case to Parliament, and since the Puritan church was not in very good standing in Episcopal England, they won it, the selectmen being released and the tax rescinded. From that time onward Friends were free from taxation for the support of the established church in that section of Massachusetts.

The next significant approachment between the First Church and the Friends came over a hundred years later and was highly creditable and advantageous to both. Being exempt from taxation for the support of the established religion and free to go their own way, Friends flourished during the entire eighteenth century and during the early part of the nineteenth century constituted the substantial and progressive element of the population in the entire southeastern portion of Massachusetts. There were no less than fourteen Friend's meeting houses in Dartmouth township alone.

In the meantime, First Church, deprived of the financial support of the thrifty Friends, made its way with difficulty at first, but during the latter half of the eighteenth century became fairly strong under the long and able leadership of Dr. Samuel West. He was a good representative of the more distinctly liberal wing of the Puritan churches of his time. He was latitudinarian. He did not reject Calvinism but neglected it almost entirely in his preaching and teaching.

The early portion of the nineteenth century was marked by intense theological controversy and schism, and this cut right through the churches of New Bedford. It emerged in the First Church after the death of Dr. West, in the form of a furious recrudescence of militant Calvinism that attempted to dominate the society. Being outvoted by the liberal element in the society and not being able to settle a hell-fire-and-brimstone minister as Dr. West's successor, this faction withdrew and started a church of its own. First Church was rather badly depleted by this withdrawal, but went its own way, becoming more liberal in its theology and soon identifying itself with the Unitarian movement that was taking shape under the leadership of William Ellery Channing.

The Society of Friends, the largest and most influential body of worshippers in New Bedford, was soon riven by a similar controversy that raged for several years. For some unaccountable reason a large number of Friends became very unfriendly toward all those within the society that deviated a hair's breath either in theology or conduct from the straight and narrow way that was prescribed in their book of "discipline". This became so irksome to the liberal element, that was growing more liberal all the time in both theology and conduct, that a "separation" took place. In this case it was the conservatives that held the fort and the liberals that went forth. After holding some meetings of their own the liberals finally decided to unite with the Unitarians, which they did, and lived happily ever afterward.

This happy denouement was due largely to two persons — Orville Dewey, minister of the Unitarian Society, a man of remarkable ability and breadth of comprehension, beloved and trusted by everybody who knew him, who was aided and

abetted by Mary Rotch, leader of the liberal Friends, even more remarkable in her grasp of fundamentals and essentials than Dr. Dewey, in many respects the most influential personality in New Bedford at that time. This was the Mary Rotch of whom Ralph Waldo Emerson speaks in his journal as being such a salutary influence during the most troublous period of his life, Mary Rotch did not use the word God in her preaching and conversation, but constantly spoke of "that influence" as a guiding principle to be relied upon.

My twelve years in Los Angeles were marked by more experimentation on my part than any other period of my ministry. This was almost inevitable. The atmosphere was charged with experimental ozone. People who were staid and tradition bound elsewhere often became venturesome and ready to try almost anything when they came to Los Angeles. Innovation was normal. It was during this period that the city government introduced more experimental changes into its administration than did any other American city. Some of these "improvements" were fantastic and wasteful, while others were salutary and soon spread to other communities.

I was mildly infected with this experimental urge. I left the general administration of the church to the laity and to the officials, and a decidedly conservative course was pursued, but in my individual preaching and teaching I experimented freely. Some of my innovations were successful, outstanding being my five year preaching plan and the use I made of midweek meetings.

With our removal to New England the days of experimentation were over, so far as outward innovations were

concerned. I knew better than to try to interfere with established traditions — especially since many of them were good — but I tried through my preaching and teaching to inject into people's thinking a little much needed radical leaven of both a theological and economic character.

The conservative drag of the worship side of church work was more pronounced and was sometimes more painful to me in the New Bedford church than in any other of my ministry, but I accepted it with as good grace as I could, knowing that a one man church was as undesirable as it was impossible. The church prided itself on having the best music available — most of the musicians being imported from Boston and Providence for the Sunday services. To these professional musicians the Unitarian society was just another church and the music was for the most part decidedly orthodox, although the music committee did winnow out some of the more pronouncedly mediaeval and trinitarian features. My occasional efforts to introduce more distinctly ethical selections gained little favor, the unfamiliar always being resented by some, and nowhere so surely as in a service of worship.

When we went to New Bedford the Unitarian church was decidedly aristocratic (in the best sense) having a majority of the wealthy first families of the community in its membership. During the eighteen years of my ministry it changed its character in this respect very markedly, due in some respects to the plebeian character of its minister, but mainly due to a radical change in the economic condition of the community, reducing the city from the status of one of the wealthiest of its size in America to the status of one of the least

affluent. Prior to our arrival the church school pupils from the public schools were snubbed by those attending from the private schools who were in a majority. This condition of things gradually disappeared; the church school increased in numbers and the influx was almost entirely from the public school element.

The New Bedford church could never by any count be called a radical institution, but it would be difficult to find a society more distinctly liberal in its practices, throughout its entire history. Judged by Unitarian standards the congregation as a whole has always been conservative, both in its religious and economic views, but has been frequently served by ministers who would rank as radical in both these respects. No congregation could go farther toward exemplifying the true liberalism that Voltaire expressed when he said to one of his opponents, "I do not believe a word you say, but I will risk my life in defense of your right to say it". Members of the congregation often disagreed with what their minister said, but his right to say what he had carefully thought through was to them a sacred obligation that they must (and were bound to) defend at all costs. They had been very fortunate in having ministers whose integrity was unimpeachable and whose ability was outstanding. The members thus always felt that their minister's utterances were well worth hearing and pondering. Whether they could agree with them all was a matter of secondary importance.

Their liberalism was severely put to the test by William J. Potter who was minister of the society for more than thirty years during the latter half of the nineteenth century. He was a scholarly man, exceedingly thorough in his thinking processes, and one who expressed his views with meticulous

care. He was decidedly radical for his times in virtually all of his conclusions. He was one of the first ministers in America to speak from his pulpit in defense of the doctrine of evolution.

In the early seventies many of the leaders of the denomination were obsessed with the notion that Unitarians must sail under the "Christian" banner at all costs, and since Mr. Potter in response to official interrogations would not say unequivocally that he was "Christian", his name was omitted from the list of ministers in the denominational yearbook. He explained that he was in sympathy with all of the great world religions, finding much in each to which he could assent, but he could not subscribe to any of them with sufficient completeness to take its name. This did not satisfy those in charge of the yearbook and so his name did not appear among the list of Unitarian ministers published by the American Unitarian Association. It is probable that there were few if any of the New Bedford church members at that time who would have hesitated to say that he considered himself and his church "Christian", but they were so incensed at the way their minister was treated that the society, with virtual unanimity, severed all connections with the American Unitarian Association and other Unitarian organizations, remaining entirely aloof for two decades — until long after the denomination as a whole had repudiated the action of the editor of the yearbook in dropping Mr. Potter's name from the list of ministers.

Unitarians have periodic recurrences of Christianitis, and are experiencing a mild recrudescence of it just now.

During my ministry in New Bedford few members of the congregation would go as far as I did in my leanings toward

a humanistic and socialistic interpretation of religion, but, so far as I know, no one ever seriously questioned my right to set forth freely my views, after I had carefully thought them through and concluded that I had something to say that was worth pondering by all, whether we came to the same conclusions or not. Many members who differed from me in some of my views would have fought valiantly for my right to express them freely if that right had been questioned.

When we arrived in New England, in 1920, the cotton textile industry — due to the boost that the war had given it — was at the height of its prosperity. The output of the New Bedford mills surpassed in value that of any other textile city in America. The whale oil that had previously made the name of the city famous the world over, seemed to be greasing the machinery for the production of fine fabrics. The transition from oil to cotton in the whaling city is a good illustration of human adaptability, for no two industries could be more strikingly unlike.

The whaling business was strenuous and adventurous to the last degree, sending men far from home into the most dangerously inaccessible regions of the globe, calling for individual prowess and initiative of the highest order. Textile work, on the other hand, was distinctly local and sedentary in character, requiring infinite patience and repetitious discipline, but demanding little initiative or risk. Many a man who began his career hurling a harpoon from a wobbly little boat far away on the high seas, ended it by becoming almost as much of a fixture as the loom he tended or the bed on which he slept. As a matter of fact bed and loom became the two poles of many a person's life.

A modern cotton mill is a marvelous exhibition of man's mechanical ability. To visit a spinning room many acres in extent: to see 150,000 spindles whirring at an unbelievable rate of speed, with only an occasional attendant visible here and there; to realize that in that one room more miles of yarn are being spooled than a million of our great-grandmothers could wind in the same length of time by the methods in vogue from the time of Homer to the time of Washington — to realize this is to gain some slight understanding of man's recent mechanical triumphs.

Depression struck the textile industry long before the fateful year 1929. The decline began soon after our arrival, and before we left New Bedford, nearly twenty years later, the output was only a trickle of its former volume. A strike occurred in 1928 and for six months not a wheel turned in four-fifths of the mills. That broke the industry's back, so far as New Bedford was concerned. From that time on much of the activity in the industrial section of the city, consisted of tearing out machinery, shipping it south or selling it for junk, and razing the buildings.

To see the magnificent equipment junked that had cost so much to produce in toil and skill, was tragic enough, but was nothing to the heartbreak of seeing the human wreckage that ensued, for which there was no repair. A textile worker who has reached middle age or more has become an almost inseparable part of the machinery. I was told that it was difficult to transfer elderly workers, especially women, from one mill to another, even in the same community, when the work in the two mills was identical, so completely had they become creatures of habit. It was useless to talk of such persons readjusting their lives to other work, even if other

work were available — and none was available. Such elderly people (those past 45) were as much a part of the unsalvageable waste as the machinery that was pronounced unsalable.

The sufferings caused by the debacle of the textile industry was not confined entirely to the hapless operatives, though the major portion fell upon them. I knew conscientious operators upon whom the burden of human misery which they were unable to avert bore so heavily that they did not long survive.

With the return of war, after the long and disastrous depression, the mills that remained became active again; other industries sprang into existence and the whirr of prosperity was heard once more.

What a damnable indictment of our economic system is the fact that war brings prosperity, plenty and added pleasures, while peace brings to many, unemployment, pitiless poverty and deadly despair. What folly to talk about finding a cure for war, unless we find a cure for the predaceous cancer that infects our economic life, nullifying our nobler ideals and poisoning our incentives at their source!

The memory of the depression seems almost as nightmarish to me as the war!

The church work held up remarkably well in spite of the depression and a steady decline in the population of the city. The church school doubled in numbers, and three young people's organizations came into existence, adding much to the worth of the church in the community. Enough new members were added to the church to replace those who died or moved away. The Alliance held steadily to its membership

of about two hundred during our entire stay. What a marvelous group of women they were!

The young life in the church was due quite largely to Mrs. Hodgkin's tireless activity in their behalf, and to our able, paid directors, chosen from the congregation, who knew the field and its needs.

During the long nation-wide depression there was a growing sentiment that a minister ought to retire at sixty-five; and should on no account remain in active service after he was seventy. It was thought unfair to youth for the "old fellows" to cumber the ground that younger men could cultivate more effectively. I announced my desire to retire, but did not succeed in getting my resignation accepted until after I was seventy. Soon the war was on, and sentiment veered diametrically. Then, people looked askance at me as much as to say, "Why are you loafing when you ought to be relieving some younger man for active service in the field." Circumstances certainly do alter opinions!

My active ministry covered a span of exactly forty years. What wonderful years they were! both from the point of view of world history and from the point of view of individual experience! I was not really out of the harness once during the entire period, though the churches I served were generous in granting me fairly long summer vacations. My interests and activities were as much centered on my work while I was vacationing as during any other period — including the two vacations I spent in hospitals undergoing surgical operations. If vacation experiences had been taken out of my life my work would have lost much of its mean-

ing: they were to no small extent the yeast that leavened the whole of life.

The salutary element in my vocation lay in the fact that no distinction existed between work and play — between creation and recreation: it all centered in a common purpose; all contributed to the same end. For the most part I was doing what I most wanted to do. I was being paid a good income for doing what I should gladly have paid for the privilege of doing, if I had been able to do so.

Not that my life was free from fret and suffering. Far from it: I suffered acutely at times, but it was the growing pains of adjustment to my vocation. I suffered, not because I wanted to be doing something else, but from a sense of inadequacy, from a realization that I was not achieving what I thought ought to be accomplished. The difficulties of my work gave me a measure of its importance, and only tied me the more closely to it.

I entered my vocation deliberately and entirely on my own responsibility, asking no one's advice and receiving none. Instead of being pushed into it, I climbed into it over sharp stones carrying some bruises with me. Sometimes, when I momentarily wanted to run away from my work and leave it forever, I would look around and search for something I would prefer to do. I could never find anyone with whom I wanted to trade places, even if I had been trained for the other person's job.

As I look back now, how peaceful and satisfactory and uneventful those forty years seem to have been, how free from serious contention, controversy and strife our church life was, while the storms of war, political bitterness and economic strife raged all about us! Perhaps that serenity was

not all to my credit. If my work had been more effective, it might have aroused more of the contention and controversy of achievement. In retrospect, however, I am strangely well satisfied with my ministry, so far as my intentions were concerned. My only serious regret is that I was not more efficient. It seems to me that I would go on trying to do what I always have tried to do, if the future remained open to me.

The fine relationship I enjoyed with the officers and members of the churches I served, is a cherished memory of my latter years. Five churches, as different from each other as the geographical distances between them — Humboldt, Iowa; Helena, Montana; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Los Angeles, California; New Bedford, Massachusetts — all hallowed names to me, for each was home in a peculiar sense; each was a field of labor highly congenial. I recall the people I worked with and was associated with in each place with equal satisfaction.

Mrs. Hodgkin feels the same way. She gave herself to the churches without reserve, but did not find the position of minister's wife irksome or burdensome. It brought her into the kind of work she liked, and into cooperation with the people whose association she most enjoyed. She entered wholeheartedly into all of the activities of the churches, but always reserved first place for the children and young people, which to no small degree accounts for the fact that the church schools and young people's organizations were reasonably successful.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Sanctifying the Secular and Secularizing the Sacred

THE liberal religious movement of the nineteenth century was primarily a preaching movement, as vital forward-looking religious movements almost invariably are. The person who has a strong belief that a new and better life is possible and available, must proclaim his convictions and define his position in words, pointing out with all the intelligence he can muster the steps by which that better life can be achieved. That is preaching.

Call the roll of the outstanding liberal ministers — Channing, Ballou, Parker, Bellows, Starr King, Collier, Beecher, Savage — all were preachers of power, first, last and all the time; and it was through preaching that they did their work. They preached not only from church pulpits, but from the lecture platform, through the printed page, by letters, by conversation, whenever and wherever the opportunity offered. Emerson deserted the church and made the Lyceum the most influential pulpit in America.

Holmes, Whittier, Lowell and many others preached the same liberating gospel through the medium of general literature; while George Eliot, Victor Hugo and Tolstoy, the

most powerful preachers in Europe, used the novel as the homiletic channel for their releasing gospel. Bancroft, Parkman, Prescott, Motley and Sparks made history carry their messages, while Spencer, Darwin, Huxley, Fisk, Yeoman and other scientists let the laboratory proclaim the new salvation to mankind. Dorothy Dix, Clara Barton, Susan B. Anthony, Florence Nightingale, Jane Addams and a host of consecrated women preached the salvation of service by a multitude of activities.

These trenchant preachers hewed straight to the line of truth, as they saw it, letting the chips of criticism fly freely, regardless of who might be hurt. They plowed up the baked soil of orthodoxy and let in the fructifying sunlight, arousing the fervent approval of some and the furious opposition of others.

This liberal religious upsurge was primarily a lay movement. Even those who had pulpits in churches were lay preachers nevertheless. Their "orders" came from within instead of without; were individual rather than institutional. There was no apostolic succession. They were ordained by the hands that the need of the times laid upon them.

The church as a whole was only superficially touched by the liberal movement. For the most part it went its way little altered, continuing to proclaim the faith, once delivered, in the same old way. The liberal preachers who retained their pulpits, maintained only a precarious hold on the outer fringes of the church.

Formal worship was a matter of small importance to most of these pioneer preachers — as was the case with Amos and Jesus and Socrates — the great pioneer preachers of antiquity. No modern Jeremiah denounced the deadening effects of

formal worship in such scathing terms as did the prophets of old. Emerson could not adapt himself to formal worship of any kind, and left the church largely for that reason, gaining much by the change.

Near the close of the nineteenth century, the liberal ministers of America came near being a completely unfrocked fellowship. Ecclesiastical trappings had almost disappeared. The minister was indistinguishable from the layman. That was about the time that I began to veer toward the liberal ministry, and I assumed that the movement toward the left would continue in thought as well as form. But a rightest emphasis set in, somewhat to my dismay. Worship rather than prophecy became the watchword. The minister must remember that he was a priest as well as a preacher. To lead the people in a solemn service of devotion was an even more sacred duty than to lead them to new possibilities of life through trenchant preaching and teaching, according to some of the self-appointed leaders.

Regardless of the fact that virtually all vital religious movements in history have finally ossified around elaborate forms of worship and lost their vision, an increasing number of ostensibly liberal church people came to the conclusion that less provocative preaching and more restful ritual was an imperative need. The sermon must be reduced to its lowest terms and relegated to a secondary place. It must be a neat, artistic little homily: short, sweet and soothing; mildly pleasing to everybody, but arousing and disturbing no one.

We began to hear much about "enrichment" of the service of worship as the crying need of liberal religion. If we could have brought forth dynamic rituals, vibrant with the

new ethical, humanistic faith struggling for expression — rituals that would give wings to the sermon and make preaching more searching and effective — that would have been real progress and would be salutary indeed. Some earnest efforts have been made toward that end; much excellent modern service material is now available and is being used effectively in a few places: but congregations are loath to use the unfamiliar often enough for it to gather the unction they instinctively associate with worship. The old, musty phraseology, that puts the intelligence to sleep instead of awakening it, is preferred by an astonishing number of people who call themselves liberal.

My awkward essay to make modern materials more easily available to ministers and congregations was certainly inglorious enough to close my lips against criticism of others.

Enrichment of the service as carried out in many of our churches, meant a retreat rather than an advance. Professional musicians were employed in all churches that could afford them. They knew little about the new gospel, and cared less. To them the liberal church was just another church. Their standards conformed to the old order. The familiar songs and the old liturgical phraseology flowed so much more easily from their lips that the "enriched" service was little more than a resurgence of mildly washed-out orthodoxy. It is so much more pleasant to be soothed than to be aroused, to acquiesce in the old and familiar, rather than to make an effort to grasp the often disturbing new, that many congregations willingly followed the lines of least resistance.

Instead of giving wings to the sermon the enriched service often weighted it down. It muffled the minister's utterances

instead of making them more vibrant. Preaching became less challenging and more apologetic.

I am glad that some of us continued to preach forward-looking liberalism as best we could, and did not worry too much about enrichment of service.

Perhaps this reactionary tendency was inescapable. All dynamic movements seem to spend themselves in a generation or two, and sink back into comfortable conformity. The grandchildren of revolutionists are likely to be socially lethargic or even reactionary. Witness the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution! Have some of us reached the somnolent third generation stage in our religion?

Liberalism of every kind is in retreat everywhere, and is putting up only a desultory rear guard defense. It is being squeezed out of existence from three sides. On one side is an aggressive, highly organized and completely unscrupulous reactionism — religious, economic and political. On another side is a bumptious, ruthless, often shallow radicalism (much less dangerous but more feared by most of us). And on the third side is a resistant, impervious indifferentism, incapable of taking a courageous stand for anything. All these are inimical to true liberalism.

It is contrary to the nature of things that liberalism should take on much institutional strength. Institutions inevitably become self-centered and defensively reactionary. It is the function of liberalism to create and maintain an atmosphere in which life can function freely, rather than to create and maintain powerful institutions.

A liberal church is a paradox. The words liberal and church tend to cancel each other as do the realities back of

them. An institution that is churchly cannot long remain very liberal, and an institution that is liberal cannot be much of a church. That is one reason I have preferred to call the group I work with a school of life. A school is a temporary working association. Schools may come and schools may go but truth seeking and truth proclaiming should go on forever.

As educational institutions become large and wealthy they are inclined to lose their forward-looking vision, and become defenders of the *status quo*. Our American universities have fortunately kept their vision clear in the field of physical science, and their achievements have been prodigious. If we had done as well in all other respects, we would not be in the tragic condition we are today. Discovery of atomic energy would be our greatest boon instead of our greatest danger.

Ecclesiastical forces, here as everywhere, endeavor to turn our schools into drill barracks and our teachers into drill-masters in defense of the faith of the fathers. Few of us fully realize how ominous a threat that is to our free institutions.

I find more "pure religion and undefiled" in the secular life than in the so-called sacred realm, in spite of the fact that the ecclesiastical forces have done everything in their power to damn even the name secular and to put it into disrepute everywhere. A person is religious in proportion as he comes to terms with reality. At no time is he in such vital touch with reality as in his daily life of contact with the world forces round about him — especially when he comes to grips with those forces in creative action. An understanding of the laws, processes and pointings of the world forces about us, is a better approach to a real religious experience, to my way

of thinking, than attempting to come to terms with some hypothetical, transcendent, personal being by rite and supplication.

The best evidence of real religion is the finer quality or tone that life takes on when it functions well. Unless that finer quality appears in the home, the shop, the market place and wherever people congregate in their daily lives, the emotions that are aroused in the so-called sanctuary by rite and supplication are little more than pious delusions and indulgences.

Segregated religion is no religion at all. Such so-called religion is pure cant and unconscious hypocrisy. The worst indictment against institutional religion lies in its attempts to segregate that which cannot be segregated. You might as well separate the pollen from the flower and expect it to be productive, as to separate the sacred from the secular and expect such a religion to be fruitful instead of sterile.

The most important contribution the United States of America ever made to human progress was a secularizing process. It occurred when our ancestors disestablished the church and established the school — when the government renounced responsibility for the salvation of souls in another world and in another life, but accepted responsibility for the nurture of souls in this world and in this life, thereby anchoring our faith in an educational process rather than in theological belief. That was the real revolution that the fainthearted and the reactionaries are now trying to revoke.

The only sanctification I can recognize is consummated through vital service to life, and is more likely to occur in the so-called secular realm than anywhere else. When we

attempt to exalt the sacred at the expense of the secular, or try to distinguish the one from the other, we are only dodging vital issues and substituting pious platitudes for pure religion — a favorite subterfuge of ecclesiasticism.

I was not as active in community affairs as my exaltation of the secular might lead readers to expect. This was due to limitations that I was unable to overcome. I early made the painful discovery that I had little capacity for institutional or organizational leadership, and such influence as I was to exert must come mainly through my speaking and teaching, not only in my own church but through other channels that were open to me, and I bent my efforts to that end. I belonged to and participated in many secular organizations, where I met people with a great variety of interests. I did this not only to broaden somewhat my field of action, but to gain an understanding of life that would make my preaching and teaching more vitally effective.

During our Los Angeles residence my capacity as a public servant was given a rather severe test. For several years I was one of five members of the Juvenile Court Committee for Los Angeles County. This was an exceedingly important position, as the county at that time had over twenty-five hundred juvenile wards, and the direct oversight of these wards devolved upon the Committee.

About one hundred and fifty salaried positions had to be filled, consisting of superintendents and attendants for Juvenile Hall and the detention home, probation officers, clerks and stenographers. The committee was also expected to inspect all institutions and homes to which wards of the county

were assigned. One could have given all of his time to this work and felt that he was handling it inadequately. For weeks at a time I gave more time and thought to this work than to my parish.

The most heartbreaking feature was the task of finding competent men and women for the exacting positions in which the workers came into direct contact with the juvenile wards. At that time there were no trained workers for such positions. We had to pick up such persons as were available almost regardless of their lack of qualifications. It sometimes seemed as if every preacher and teacher in Southern California who had made a failure of his profession, deemed himself or herself peculiarly qualified to handle delinquent young people. We were swamped by applicants of that character. They were often people of talent and education, who could pass a good examination and make a favorable impression upon the committee, but usually there was some screw loose in their make-up that unfitted them for exacting work with anybody, especially with young people. We were sometimes compelled to give more time to employees of the department who went wrong than to the wards of the county who were supposed to be our special concern. I dislike the term "delinquent children", for in nine cases out of ten the delinquency lies elsewhere than with the child.

I soon concluded that guiding and training the young, whether delinquent or not, was properly an educational function and that the schools and not the courts should have charge of the whole matter. Teachers' training schools should be broadened and have special departments for the training of workers with delinquents. The so-called juvenile judge should not be a judge at all in the ordinary sense, but should

be a specially trained teacher with a sufficient knowledge of law to handle the cases that came before him. The ordinary judge's training in our law schools and in such practice as he usually has before being elected to the bench, seemed to me to unfit him rather than to fit him for dealing with adolescents.

I am glad to observe that, during the generation that has passed since I had my experience, the schools have taken over much of the work that formerly came under the jurisdiction of the courts. I was painfully aware of how incompetent we all were to do the work we were attempting. We had neither the time nor adequate qualifications. The personnel of the entire department, from judge to humblest attendant, were, with the best of good will, fumbling and feeling their way by the tragically costly method of trial and error, and the wards of the county were the losers.

While I was in New Bedford a committee from the labor unions visited me and asked me to be a candidate for the School Committee with the endorsement of the unions. If I had asked the members of the church individually what I should do, I am sure that a majority of them would have said "run for the position, but not as a labor candidate". However, when I decided, wholly on my own responsibility, to accept the endorsement of the unions, no dissatisfaction was openly expressed and all were glad to have me on the committee.

Almost immediately after assuming my duties on the School Committee, an uncontrolled outburst of temper on my part gave me a position of influence among all sorts and conditions of people in the entire community, such as I ap-

parently could not have gained in any other way. A vote was jammed through in five minutes for the complete reorganization of the High School in which the Principal was to be shoved into an innocuous corner and the Vice Principal was to be given administrative control. Neither the Superintendent of Schools nor the Principal of the High School had been consulted, nor had any inkling of what was coming. I was so new and inexperienced in such procedure that I could only gasp out a feeble negative vote. The other members were in collusion and passed the measure without debate.

When I consulted the Superintendent and Principal the next day I found them intensely incensed at the action, but when I tried to get them to denounce the whole affair, as I felt sure they not only had a right to do but were really bound to do, they showed the white feather and seemed to feel that they must accept in some way whatever the board demanded of them.

I brooded over the matter and wrote a carefully worded protest to present at the next meeting, asserting that the procedure was not only a violation of the rules of the School Committee, but was contrary to all legislative practices, and that I did not believe that it would hold if contested. When the meeting was called to order they began arrogantly introducing measures for the shifting about of teachers from one department to another without the knowledge of the Superintendent or Principal, consulting the wishes of the Vice-Principal only, who was to be the beneficiary of the changes. Apparently forgetting all about the written protest in my pocket, to my own amazement and to the astonishment of all present, I found myself standing up, pounding the table, shaking my fists in all directions, denouncing the entire affair

and loudly shouting what I would and would not do, in very unacademic language. The other members of the board were dumfounded. For the apparently mild tempered new member of the board to so soon dare stand alone and defy all of the old timers was unprecedented. After a stormy session the meeting adjourned without passing any of the proposed measures. The next morning I had the big headlines in the newspapers and the attention of the community was centered on me in a way that I had never before experienced. That was my opportunity. I gave carefully prepared statements of my position to the newspapers, and both of them immediately came out with strong editorials endorsing my stand. The result was that the entire attempt was aborted. A few unimportant, face saving measures were all that were attempted. Later, the High School was reorganized in an orderly and deliberate fashion, but it was a different reorganization from the one precipitately attempted in favor of a faction. It was surprising how solid my reputation as a public servant of ability and integrity was from that time onward.

My standing in the community was enhanced in other ways. I used the press freely to set forth my educational views, as occasions arose, as well as to express my ideas on many other questions of human interest. I was in much demand as a speaker at school assemblies and on other school occasions.

I was known in the community as the "radio preacher" — our morning services being broadcast during the greater part of my eighteen years in New Bedford, and I prepared my sermons for the unseen audience as well as for the visible one. This gave me prestige, not only in the city but in the sur-

rounding communities. Many Catholics regularly listened to my sermons and liked them, not as religion, but as a helpful philosophy of life.

At the end of my four year term on the school committee, I was re-elected by the largest vote of anyone on the entire ticket, receiving almost as heavy a majority in the Catholic sections of the city as in other parts.

During a protracted strike in the textile mills of New Bedford in which twenty-five thousand workers were out for six months, my sentiments as publicly expressed were not agreeable to some who were the best supporters of our church. I made no claim to a knowledge of the technical matters in dispute, but I vigorously asserted that the directors were dead wrong in arbitrarily announcing a wage cut without consulting the representatives of the wage earners and stating the case to them before a reduction was decided upon. This, I maintained, put a moral obligation upon the operators to make the first reasonable move toward a settlement. As a matter of fact, the operators did at long last make a reasonable offer of compromise. Acting as chairman of a committee from the ministerial union of the city, I then went before the labor union leaders and urged them in as strong terms as I could to accept the proffered offer. This they finally did.

There were few employees in our church, while many of our members were heavy stockholders as well as directors and officials of the corporations. I felt that this not only gave me an opportunity but put upon me a special obligation to see to it, as far as I was able, that the interests of the less fortunate were not encroached upon. Since the mills were pay-

ing no dividends and many of them were fast using up their surpluses, a wage cut seemed imperative to the directors if operations were to continue. I did not argue that matter, but insisted that wage earners who spent their entire lives in the plants, many of them being highly skilled and by reason of that special skill being virtually disqualified for any other kind of work, had a vested interest more vital than that of the stockholders and were entitled to consultation on matters in which their livelihood was immediately involved.

This point was conceded in the end and it was written into the terms of the settlement that in the future, representatives of the operatives should have a voice in all wage adjustments, and in other matters in which their interests were directly involved; but the textile operators were among the last to give up the old arbitrary prerogative of issuing peremptory orders to the employees on the "take it or leave it" basis.

I thus did have a hand in settling the textile strike, though it may have been a minor one as others were advocating the same principles. I was prepared to offer my resignation if any considerable dissatisfaction with my part in the controversy had arisen. With the possible exception of one family, the general consensus throughout the church people was that my part in the affair had been a commendable one, though this amicable spirit did not prevail until after the controversy was over and a cooling off period ensued.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Conclusions

I HAD intended concluding these confessions with a summary of my faith; but anyone who has followed me thus far must have a fair conception of my general attitude toward life — an attitude which necessarily changes with every breath. I cannot be satisfied with any formula of faith that either I or anyone else can put into words.

Apparently nothing is static. All is transition. Everything is becoming something else. The great, all embracing life, of which human life is a phase, pushes ever on through countless processes of transmutation. Endless transmutation is apparently the one universal fact of life — the reality from which stems all of the varied conceptions of immortality, from the most grotesque to the most sublime, by which man comforts himself and finds a measure of compensation for the tragedies he encounters.

"The whole succession of men through the ages should be considered as One Man, ever living and always learning" (Pascal).

People have reacted in many ways to the universe of life that enshrouds and includes us all. They have tried to respond to it as a whole by personifying it and attempting to commune with it as one person communes with another. By calling it impressive names, by inundating it with a deluge of

assumptions, by erecting awesome institutions in recognition of it, by bowing down abjectly before it and supplicating it, they have imagined that they could actually penetrate or even resolve it, and get responsive action from it. So far as I can see they have only succeeded in deepening and darkening the mystery — investing it with superstitious adumbrations.

I prefer to sweep aside all of these vain expostulations, wizardly institutions, genuflections and entreaties, leaving in place of them something much more meaningful and expressive — silence. We can talk about the fragmentary, objective realities that impinge upon us in life: we can talk about ourselves and the work of our hands: we cannot talk about ultimate reality as a whole. Silence is our only sensible approach.

My experiences lead me to the following working hypothesis:

In the realm of life,
Perfection of any kind is impossible anywhere:
Improvement of every kind is possible everywhere.

This means abandoning theological assumptions and accepting the scientific approach to life. I am convinced that the wholehearted practice of this hypothesis will enable us individually and collectively to achieve an ever increasing degree of real prosperity, real security and real happiness — something far better than anything we have attained, or even approached, thus far. Striving and straining for complete answers to life's unanswerable questions, pursuing theological promises of perfection, is like following the will-o'-the-wisp that lures us off into the bogs of oblivion.

I end these confessions on the same note as I began them. I approach my eightieth year with the same general attitude I had when I was eight. I prefer to accept my fragment of life for what it seems to be; to endeavor to make the most of it while it lasts, using the accumulated experiences of the past and the reasonable promises of the future for a guide as to what is most worth while; then cheerfully to face the unknown future, accepting whatever follows without any assumptions as to what that sequence may be. I much prefer this to anything the confusing theologies of the world have to offer.

My general attitude is well expressed by a familiar quotation from Emerson that I frequently used during my ministry:

A man may give up all that passes current as religion, but if he bend before truth and justice and love; if he feel that there is something sovereign within him which it were better to die than to disobey, he is on the open highway to those truths and confidences which are the imperishable part of religion.

The following benediction, which I used many times, formulated itself in my mind almost spontaneously at a memorial service for President McKinley in the year 1901:

With a courage that shall not fail us,
With a love and sympathy that shall ever abide,
With a faith that shall make us faithful to all of the diviner voices that speak to us in our daily lives,
We would rise into the realm of true divinity and be at one with God.

Epilogue

The great thing in my life has been the companionship of one who habitually lived far above the demands of the golden rule; always doing much more for others, in thought and in deed, than she ever dreamed of having others do for her. So to live is heaven.

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